BBC
goodfood
Middle East
February 2021
DHS15
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Cook with love

Valentine's Day special

- Spanish-style slow-cooked lamb shoulder & beans
- Seared duck with ginger mash
- Red velvet cookies

30 minutes easiest ever midweek meals

BUDGET-*FRIENDLY* BAKES



Lemon drizzle sponge pudding

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Tried & tested recipes ✶ Valentine's Day dining experiences ✶ Restaurant reviews ✶ Luxe staycation



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Khyber

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Looking for extra spice on Valentine's Day? Romance your loved ones with a traditional Indian set menu dinner.

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3-course set menu | 2 glasses of welcome drinks | 1 bottle of grape

AED 699 PER COUPLE

3-course set menu | 2 glasses of welcome drinks | 1 bottle of sparkling grape

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DUKES
THE PALM

Welcome to February!



As cliché as it may sound, love is truly in the air this month. With the ongoing pandemic and everyone confined to their homes for the majority of 2020, it seems like most of us want to take every opportunity possible to dine outdoors, of course as responsibly as we can. If you're looking for a memorable dining experience this Valentine's Day, turn to page 12. Staying in? Impress your loved one with a homemade sweet treat (from page 33). You can also find a delish make-ahead roast (page 44). For the perfect surprise, whisk your partner away to a lavish stay at the Burj Al Arab. With plenty of culinary offerings and impeccable service, you can't go wrong with this staycation.

For recipe inspiration, celebrity chef Tom Kerridge offers a hearty weekend meal, while Rosie's seasonal menu comprising versatile pears will have you reaching for this fruit more often than ever. Since Shrove Tuesday is looming, shop for supplies and try our delectable selection of pancakes (page 58). We also have comfort food for the family, wholesome pizzas and plenty of ideas for the month ahead.

Happy Reading!

Nicola Monteath
Editor

WHAT WE'RE LOVING!



Liz Smyth says: "These blueberry cheesecake pancakes combine two of my favourite dishes in one."



"I'll be taking a break from cooking over the weekend, so this slow cooker pot roast is the perfect make-ahead dish," says graphic designer, Froilan.

BBC goodfood Middle East

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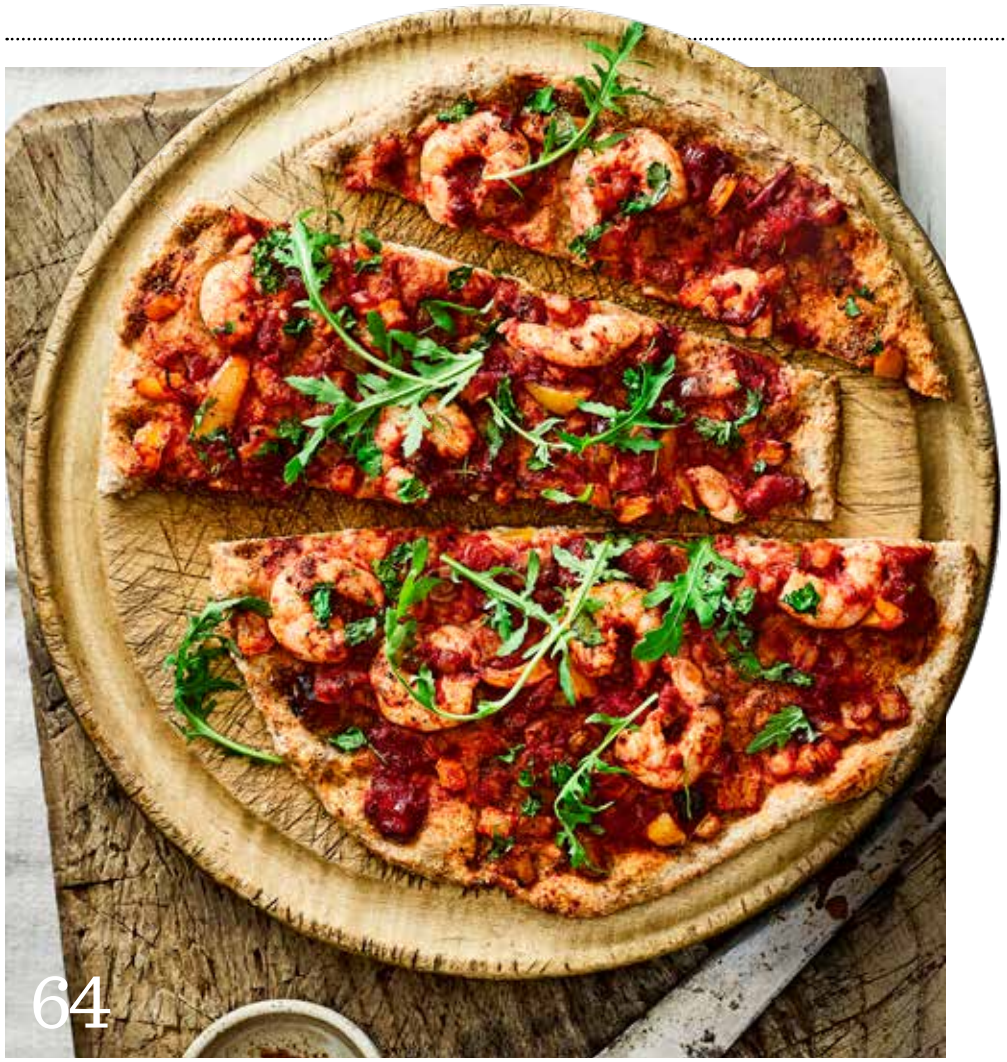
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Our recipe descriptions

V Suitable for vegetarians.
❄ You can freeze it.
Not suitable for freezing.
Easy Simple recipes even beginners can make.
A little effort These require a bit more skill and confidence – such as making pastry.
More of a challenge Recipes aimed at experienced cooks.
Low fat 12g or less per portion.
Low cal 500 calories or less per main.
Superhealthy Low in saturated fat, 5g or less per portion; low in salt, 1.5g or less; and at least one of the following: provides one-third or more of your daily requirement of fibre, iron, calcium, folic acid and/or vitamin C, or counts at least one portion of your recommended 5-a-day fruit and veg.
Good for you Low in saturated fat, low in salt.
Heart healthy Low in saturated fat, with 5g or less, and low in salt, with 1.5g or less, and high in omega-3 fatty acids.
1 of 5-a-day The number of portions of fruit and/or veg contained in a serving.
Vit C Iron Omega-3 Calcium Folate Fibre
Indicating recipes that are good sources of useful nutrients.
GLUTEN FREE Indicates a recipe is free from gluten.
Some recipes contain pork. They are clearly marked and are for non-Muslims only. Look for this symbol:
P Contains pork.

YOUR SAY

We love hearing from you!

star letter



As a medical school student who also works part-time, I am constantly busy, and rarely have as much time as I would like to commit to my passion for cooking. Also, as a vegetarian, it is easy to fall into the carb trap of quickly making pasta every night, to stay on a money budget. However, thanks to the January issue, I was inspired by your '30 wise ways to shop and cook,' saving me both time and money, so I have more of both to try out some of your delicious, quick and healthy recipes listed in the 'Easiest ever weekday' meals. Lifesaver!

Raven Haan



I loved the 'Lighter lunches' in the January issue, especially after the heavy festive season filled with good food, carbs and sweets. This month is all about detoxing, and for that the 'Cook, Freeze & Reheat' meals were perfect for me to prepare in advance.

Johannes Roth



My daughter and I love cooking together. After reading the 'Take the biscuit' recipes, my girl has noted down everything she likes and wants to try. Also, we tried the beetroot mint dip with pulao and cutlets. It was really good! Thank you for the wonderful recipes. We are eagerly waiting for more delicious meals.

Lakshmi P

WIN!

LAKELAND GIFT VOUCHER WORTH AED1,000

Lakeland is the home of creative kitchenware and ideas for around the home. These nifty products make everyday life easier and more enjoyable, whether you're cooking, baking, cleaning, doing the laundry, entertaining, or searching for the perfect gift. The kitchen is the heart of the home, and at Lakeland, you can find everything to help you prepare, serve and store proper homemade food. Household chores are accomplished quickly and without a hassle, with the brand's range of items on hand, each designed to perform brilliantly. *Find Lakeland stores at Mall of The Emirates, Dubai Mall, and Dubai Marina Mall*

To send in your Star Letter and win this prize, visit the Competitions page on bbcgoodfoodme.com



TALK TO US!

Email us on feedback@bbcgoodfoodme.com
with your thoughts and comments, and send us your photos with your copy of BBC Good Food ME!

You can also connect with us on social media! Find us on: **@bbcgoodfoodme**

Or, you could write to us at: The Editor, BBC Good Food Middle East. Grosvenor Business Tower, Barsha Heights, Office 804 PO Box 13700, Dubai, UAE.

Photographs SUPPLIED

top buy

From tableware to kitchen appliances, here's our list of most wanted items to make dining and entertaining all the more fun



Toast everything from a crumpet to rye bread with the Toast Select Luxe. The toaster features six bread settings for white, brown, rye, grain, fruit and crumpets; offers wider slots for thick bagels, artisanal bread and pastries and allows you to achieve your ideal brownness level - the LED light indicates your progress. It also offers auto features such as 'A Bit More' and 'A Quick Look' function for flawless toasting. Tidying up is easy too, with a pull-out crumb tray that you can just tip into your dustbin. The Toast Select is available in brushed stainless steel with a premium metallic finish and chrome accents.

AED 699 at Sageappliances.ae.



The new LG InstaView Range with Air Sous Vide is a game-changer for home cooks. With precise low temperature and airflow control, vacuum-sealed foods are able to lock in maximum flavour to elevate dishes. LG Air Sous Vide can consistently maintain a temperature between 100- 205 F (38-96C) for up to 48 hours without water.

With LG InstaView technology, tapping twice on the oven's glass door automatically turns on an interior light to make visually checking the progress a breeze.

If there's one thing we dislike about ovens, it's the clean-up. Thankfully, with the EasyClean feature, users can maintain the cleanliness of the oven and the cooktop with no effort and chemicals, using only pure water for a sparkling clean inside in just 10 minutes. The range also features LG's ProBake Convection technology for quick, thorough cooking without preheating, while Air Fry offers flavourful fried foods using significantly less oil than deep frying. For added convenience, the range can be monitored using the ThinQ app connected to Google Assistant and Amazon Alexa smart speakers. Furthermore, LG partners SideChef, Innit, Drop, and Tovala offer culinary inspiration through hundreds of recipes on their apps. You can also send cooking instructions to the oven, to set the appropriate cooking mode and temperature. With Drop and a smart Thermomix, making pizza at home is a no-brainer too.

Available at LG stores.

Advertisement feature



Valentine's Day is the perfect time to shower loved ones with affection. Instead of heading out this year, surprise your loved one with a home-cooked meal served on stunning pieces for the perfect romantic night in.

Choosing the right Valentine's Day table settings can help you inject a little extra romance into an already special day. Whether you're having an intimate dinner for two, an elaborate party for friends or you just want to make this day special for your family, there are numerous table setting ideas you can use to create just the right scene.

The setting can be just as important as what it is you're serving for your romantic Valentine's Day meal. Specifically, these pieces from Yvonne Ellen at Simply Kitchen, are a truly unique range of home and giftware, designed to add charm and intrigue to your life, home and Valentine's Day. With a strong passion for beautiful vintage fine bone china alongside a love of quirky, decorative illustration combined to create one of a kind pieces, it will be a day to remember and pieces to cherish for a lifetime.

And for the rest of the days of the year that we should always remember to celebrate and come together as family, friends and loved ones, Simply Kitchen is the one-stop specialist shop for all kitchen needs. Complete with on-trend tableware, pans, utensils, food storage and new retro-inspired collections including electricals, the store is a homebody's dream.

simply kitchen

NEWS *nibbles*

What's hot and happening in the culinary world, in the UAE and across the Middle East



FARM TO FORK

Shopping for fresh produce has become incredibly convenient thanks to online platforms. If you're looking for more options, the latest one-stop shop to explore is Food Crowd; a modern-day online platform that sources and delivers fresh, high-quality produce directly from local farms. Created by experts in agriculture, from Abu Dhabi, you can find a great selection of fresh fruits, vegetables, dairy, fresh meats and pantry items, handpicked by the team with strict quality control and hygiene standards. Take your pick from the vegetable, fruit and dairy boxes, mixed organic box and organic vegetarian starter pack.

Available on App Store and Google Play. Visit foodcrowd.com for more information.



Want to treat a friend or your little ones every month? The Sweet Box by Candylicious, a curated monthly subscription, is a great gift for those with a sweet tooth. Delivered right to the doorstep, each box is filled with themed goodies and plenty of chocolate and candy.

The subscription plan is available for three, six and 12 months from AED 149-279 and available in two sizes: Tasting and Classic.

THE BEST BITES



Mark your calendar!

The Dubai Food Festival (DFF) will be returning from February 25 to March 13 for its eighth edition. The annual culinary extravaganza will take place over 17 days, including three weekends of food and dining events throughout the city. This year's edition will focus on four highlights: rich culinary diversity, authentic and homegrown cuisine, unique restaurant experiences, and exceptional value for money. Expect a programme filled with experiences such as Chef's Tables, Masterclasses, chef collaborations, Etisalat Beach Canteen and more.

Visit dubaifoodfestival.com for more information.

Photographs SUPPLIED



Something sweet

Marks & Spencer's Valentine's Day range makes it easier for couples to gift a decadent treat. Their chocolates are made with 100 per cent responsibly sourced cocoa, with premium-quality ingredients that have the highest ethical and environmental standards. Take your pick from the Love whips; a romantic twist on their signature Walnut whips, now filled with strawberries and cream-flavoured mallow; gummy sweets such as Avo lot of love to give – ideal for sharing; or this I heart you chocolates bag of Swiss milk chocolates.

SHOP LOCAL





Founded by Ambika Rajgopal, **Haute Sauce** is a locally-based artisanal range of small-batch hot sauces made with fresh ingredients. Available in three flavours: Original (Habanero and coriander), Mellowing (Bird's eye chillies) and the limited-edition Puckering (Habanero and raw mango), it's the perfect condiment to jazz up a pasta, stew, stir-fries, salad dressings, marinades, and anything else that needs a bit of heat. It's absolutely delish with a sunny-side-up egg!

Available in 110 grams (AED 55) and 440 grams (AED 210) at hautesaucery.com.





Curious Elephant, created by Melody Mok (an Australian foodie of Hong Kongese descent), offers chilli sauces to amplify everyday meals. You may have spotted the aromatic Chinese chilli oil with Sichuan pepper and peanut on Instagram, as the sauce has been gracing food bloggers' pages over the last couple of months. Why? It's made from fresh ingredients and showcases a blend of aromatic, slowly infused spices that leave a tingling feeling in your mouth. Those who love citrus notes will enjoy the Vietnamese chilli sauce with lemongrass and garlic. Both sauces elevate rice dishes, noodles, soups, stir-fries and even grilled meats and fish. You can mix it with mayo for a spicy sandwich spread too - the possibilities are endless!

AED 50 per bottle at curious-elephant.com



LOVE IS IN THE AIR

Celebrate the Night of San Valentino at Roberto's DIFC

Treat your loved one to a Valentine's Day to remember, or host a tête-à-tête get-together for close friends, at this award-winning hotspot nestled at the heart of DIFC. The evening, aptly titled Five Shades of Love, will feature seductively fresh oysters, homemade ravioli, and a decadent chocolate and raspberry dessert for the ultimate finale. Roberto's Five Shades of Love has got all the inspiration you need for a memorable dining experience.

Want to take it up a notch? Providing a sense of privacy, without compromising on exceptional views, the team at Roberto's have curated an exclusive five-course menu to tuck into at the Cortina or Lounge Terraces. Priced at AED 5,000 per couple inclusive of a bottle of premium bubbly and grape pairings.

In addition to this, the dining and socialising area will also feature their exceptional à la carte menu. At Roberto's, you and your Valentine will be spoiled for choice with impressive culinary offerings and warm hospitality to suit.

BOOK NOW

Contact +9714 386 0066 or email reservations@robertos.ae.
Visit robertosrestaurants.com for more information



Flavours of the *month*

What's hot and happening around town this month

Hakkasan, Atlantis, The Palm

This renowned Cantonese restaurant will serve a signature set menu and a la carte dishes, both of which are created to bring good health and fortune. Diners will be welcomed with a 'fire and grace' concoction, followed by a Yu sheng salad with house-cured salmon and a double treasure fortune quail blossom puff for extra good luck in 2021. Mains include crispy kumquat chicken, wok-fried prawn with macadamia nuts and braised abalone roasted duck fried rice with dried scallops and shitake mushrooms. The finale, a Mandarin dessert, is a sweet and chocolatey treat with an exciting twist courtesy of the orange cocoa butter. Centred around the principle of "Peace, Love and Sharing", Chinese New Year falls on Valentine's weekend. The Year of the Ox will also see Hakkasan's wishing tree tradition go virtual for the first time ever, which will be transformed into a digital art installation across social channels.

February 10-26th. Set menus priced at AED 498 per person. Contact +9714 426 1000.

Conrad Abu Dhabi Etihad Towers

Mexican celebrity chef Richard Sandoval recently unveiled VaKaVa Pan Latin Grill & Lounge. Expect a menu of Pan Latin dishes served as sharing platters, grilled meat churrasco and traditional rodizio served a la carte, alongside a variety of savoury sides.

Contact +9712 811 5666.

Al Hadheerah, Bab Al Shams Desert Resort



The Arabian Nights adventure is back at Bab Al Shams Desert Resort's signature dining venue. Explore the sights, sounds and tastes of Arabia as you enjoy horse shows and Tanoura performances, underneath the beautiful starry sky. As always, you can relish the finest cuts of meats cooked in wood-fired ovens and spit roasts.

Contact +9714 809 6202.

Photographs SUPPLIED

Hakkasan, Atlantis, The Palm



FARZI CAFÉ

This modern Indian bistro from the House of Jiggs Kalra recently unveiled a new menu across both Dubai restaurants. This one is set to be the most Instagrammable menu yet, featuring dishes such as pomelo and melon chaat served street style with nuts crushed over for texture and finished with frozen berry yoghurt and Artisanal tomato soup with buffalo mozzarella bruschetta and basil air. For entrées, try the traditional Shephard's pie deconstructed, served with spiced seared wagyu beef chunks with mashed potato; the Kerala shrimp biryani with tempered black gram raita, and creamy malai paneer with a desi ratatouille twist and fresh Parmesan.

Contact +97152 689 2012 (City Walk) and +97150 407 5590 (Mall of the Emirates).



Bombay Borough

Looking for an express lunch? Make a beeline for this eatery in DIFC that showcases an ode to the iconic Indian train journeys, where meals were freshly cooked and served quickly to hungry travellers. The menu features a sharing portion of Chutney papad tokri, an extensive selection of dishes from the Smalls menu and a choice of mains, which includes street grills, Big menu plates and biryanis.

AED 99 per person on weekdays from 12-3:30pm. *Contact +9714 327 1555*

KYO

Head Chef Arturo Mendez is now serving up an Omakase Chef's Table Experience, to take diners on a sensory journey. Sited at The Pointe, the concept seats just six people, offering an experiential menu based on the fine art of Japanese cooking. Expect vivid flavour profiles of exotic Amadai fish sourced from Japan, specifically for the experience. Other dishes include the Lobster shumai, Kanpachi Ume Ngiri made with Sichuan pepper-infused oil, The Niku Yakigyoza with a hint of winter truffle, and lastly, the Smoked seabass.

Reservations need to be made a week in advance. Contact +9714 557 5182.



Dinner for two

Treat your loved one to an impressive dining experience this Valentine's Day

Prime68, JW Marriott Marquis Dubai
From the 68th floor, take in the panoramic views of Downtown Dubai's glittering skyline at this award-winning hotspot. Dine on the finest cuts of heritage breed beef and appetising sides, served alongside an exclusive five-course set menu, while sipping a glass of bubbly.

AED 995 (a table by the window) or dine à la carte (minimum spend at AED 450 or AED 500 for a table by the window). Contact +9714 414 3000.



The Maine Land Brasserie
If you and your partner love jazz, head to this renowned eatery at The Opus by Omniyat to sway along to tunes from the Maine Act. The setting, complete with a post-industrial brasserie aesthetic and meatpacking vibe, is perfectly complemented by brasserie fare. Tuck into fresh oysters and everything from fresh fish and seafood to pot roasts and steamers. Looking for a carnivorous option? You can't go wrong with their steaks or chops.

Contact +9714 577 6680.



Akira Back, W Dubai – The Palm
Enjoy a sparkling drink upon arrival and indulge in a six-course sharing-style menu brimming with tantalizing Asian delights. The glistening backdrop of Dubai's skyline will surely impress your Valentine, while the vibrant interiors and neon terrace make a great spot for adorable couple photos.

AED 1,250 per couple for a six-course sharing-style dinner and a welcome beverage. AED 1,500 per couple for a table by the window and a six-course sharing style dinner with a welcome beverage. Contact +9714 245 5800.

Cinque, FIVE Palm Jumeirah
Spoil your loved one with an enchanting evening at FIVE Palm Jumeirah's award-winning Italian ristorante, Cinque. Experience the romantic vibe of the Amalfi through a delectable four-course set menu of authentic dishes, curated by award-winning Head Chef Giuseppe Pezzella. Relish oysters, buttery foie gras, warm and cosy pasta and a slow-cooked juicy veal, complemented with a bottle of grape or sparkling. And of course, leave room for their decadent dessert.

AED 350 per person (four-course set menu) or AED 900 per couple (four-course set menu and a bottle of grape or sparkling). Contact +9714 455 9989.



Bolla
Make a beeline for this DIFC eatery to embark on a honeymoon journey around the Mediterranean Sea. The three-course menu with grape pairings showcases regional delights from France, Spain, Morocco, Greece and Italy. Whet your appetite with oysters, followed by a selection of sharing-style entrées such as Mont D'or Cheese fondue, Deep-fried ravioli stuffed with bolognese sauce, Pita bread with olives and oregano, Lamb kebab skewers with tomato and parsley in pasta fillo, Chickpeas falafel, Pickled vegetables and greens, Seafood couscous, Carabineros shrimps lollipop in tempura and chorizo and Octopus bonbon with patatas bravas. Leave room for a decadent chocolate fondue on Mediterranean fruits.

AED 500 per couple. Contact +9714 340 0046.



Sea Fu Restaurant & Bar, Four Seasons Resort Dubai at Jumeirah Beach
Spoil your loved one with a delectable three-course menu at this renowned seafood eatery. Expect sharing-style appetisers, individual mains and desserts that you and your loved can share. Vegetarian options are also available. Every couple will be offered a welcome drink with a rose for the lady. The restaurant will also be serving their a la carte menu on February 14th.

AED 760 per couple. Contact +9714 270 7802.

Couqley French Bistro
This all-time favourite French Bistro & Bar will be serving a limited-edition three-course meal featuring a choice of appetisers such as baked truffle brie en croute, burrata, escargot, and more, to begin your Valentine's meal on a fine note. We highly recommend the signature steak frites but there are plenty of main options to choose from, including duck confit and pan-seared seabass. End with a



Valentine's heart of chocolate and strawberry mousse, or another classic, the pain perdu. It's the perfect spot for a cosy, intimate vibe with authentic French offerings.

AED 259 per person. Contact +9714 514 9339.

ABU DHABI

Mermaid Restaurant, Rixos Premium Saadiyat Island
Nestled on the opulent and tranquil beachfront is the ultimate romantic treat for couples. A curated five-course set menu will be created for this celebration, with a welcome drink, solo live performances and surprise giveaways to make it extra special.

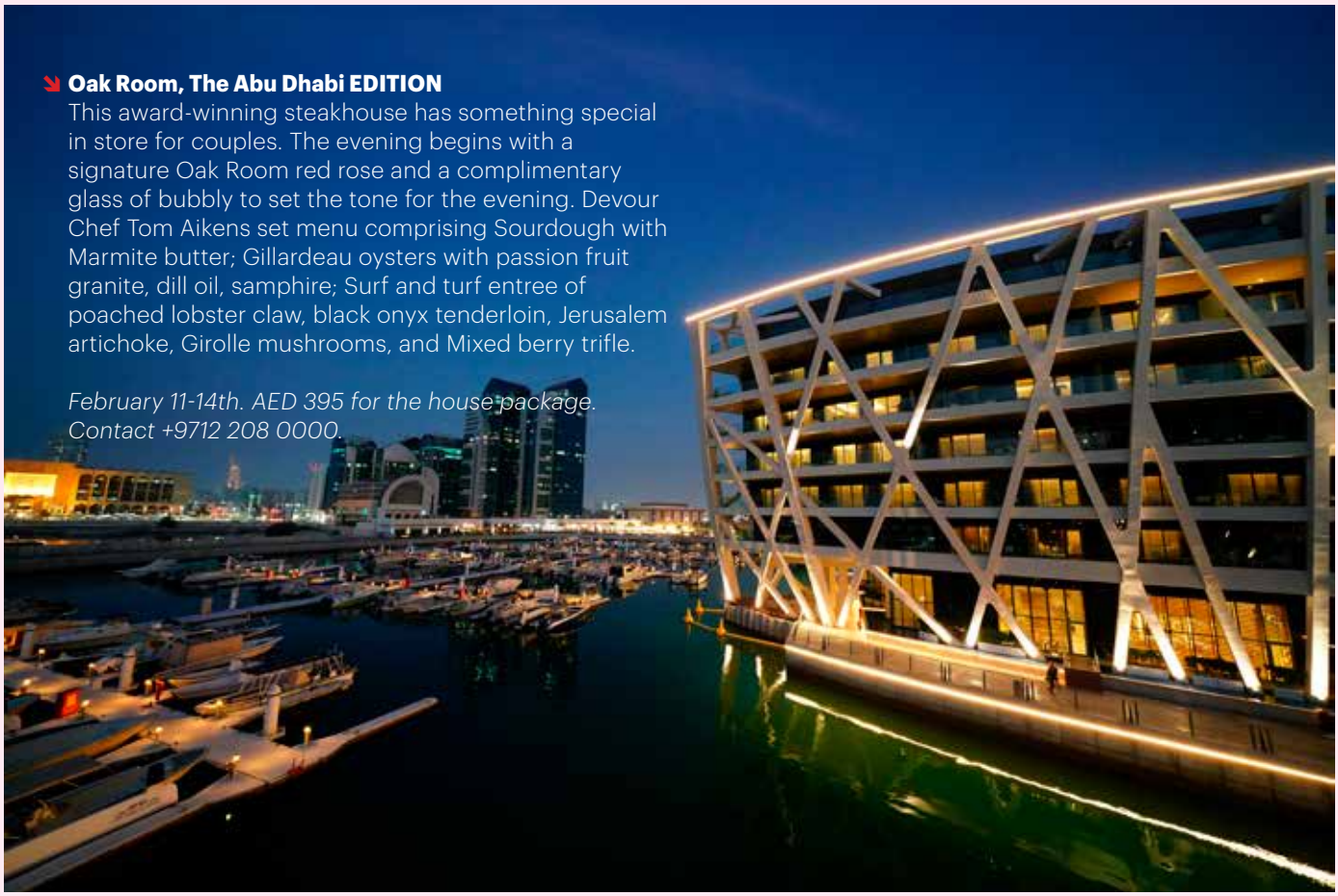
AED 699 per couple, contact +9712 492 2222.

Fairmont Bab Al Bahr
Hotfoot to Marco Pierre White Steakhouse & Grill for The Journey of Love, a specially curated experience just for Valentine's Day. The award-winning steakhouse will be serving a unique three-course set menu with grape pairings for every dish.

AED 349 net per person inclusive of a glass of bubbly. Contact+9712 654 3238.

Cipriani Yas Island
Welcoming couples for an intimate celebration is this award-winning Italian hotspot serving a set menu and signature a la carte dishes, accompanied by live music and waterfront views. Take a seat indoors or at the open-air terrace and feast on your choice of Octopus salad with potatoes, celery, "taggiasche" olives or Carpaccio alla Cipriani to begin with. For the pasta course, feast on risotto with prawns or asparagus, or the homemade spinach and ricotta ravioli with butter and sage, followed by either fillet of Dover sole or herb-crusted rack of lamb with new potatoes. To polish off your meal, the both of you will be treated to either chocolate cake or strawberry vanilla meringue.

AED 495 per person. Contact +971265 75 400.



Oak Room, The Abu Dhabi EDITION
This award-winning steakhouse has something special in store for couples. The evening begins with a signature Oak Room red rose and a complimentary glass of bubbly to set the tone for the evening. Devour Chef Tom Aikens set menu comprising Sourdough with Marmite butter; Gillardeau oysters with passion fruit granite, dill oil, samphire; Surf and turf entree of poached lobster claw, black onyx tenderloin, Jerusalem artichoke, Girolle mushrooms, and Mixed berry trifle.

February 11-14th. AED 395 for the house package. Contact +9712 208 0000.



Dusit Thani Abu Dhabi
A magical Valentine's awaits guests at Dusit Thani Abu Dhabi, as the hotel offers a plethora of dining experiences that you and your loved one will remember for years to come. Head to Namak for a five-course set menu with a sparkling beverage, or the renowned Benjarong for a flavoursome, aromatic five-course menu comprising Thai specialities and a welcome beverage to toast.

February 12-14. AED 345 per couple, for both menus. Contact +9712 698 8137.

ROOTED IN TRADITION

Executive Chef Takashi Namekata discusses why TOMO has become the go-to spot for authentic Japanese cuisine

Tell us about your culinary experience.

Chef Hirata from Tofuya Ukai in Tokyo, Japan, is the reason I got into this field. I remember a time when I had no job. "Stop wandering! Come and work with me" were his exact words. He didn't even ask me if I wanted to work or what my decision was, I was almost forced to work with him. But I'm so glad I did, as this was the beginning of my career journey. We served over 500 diners per day at that restaurant, so it was a great experience. I began as junior help in the kitchen, at 23 years old, and worked my way up. I owe my strong flair for cooking and creating new dishes to Chef Hirata. It was there where I learnt the restaurant's speciality dish, Unagi (barbecue eel), which is still my go-to dish for lunch. After gaining plenty of experience, Chef Hirata recommended me to a friend launching Kisaku, and that's when I relocated to Dubai as Head Chef. I worked there for four years and joined TOMO as Executive Chef over six years ago.

Describe TOMO.

TOMO translates to "Friends" in Japanese. It's a place where good friends meet and share memorable occasions often, and where guests feel like they're home. Our concept is to take diners on a culinary journey with traditional Japanese dishes, flavours and ambience of Tokyo, in a tranquil setting.

TOMO's customer base is predominantly Japanese. How have you managed to make this venue a home away from home?

Our produce is one of the contributing reasons as to why we get repeat Japanese guests. To ensure everything is as fresh as possible, we import produce twice a week and serve only premium quality fish, seafood, vegetables, protein and Japanese Wagyu. We also know exactly how to cater to the Japanese palate. For instance, our rice and vegetables are from Hokkaido, Japan, as the grains offer the perfect balance of stickiness and sweetness, a combination that our Japanese guests absolutely love as it reminds them of home.

Apart from our loyal Japanese diners, we also have a large number of Emiratis, and other nationalities, who love Japanese food or want to go down memory lane and taste similar dishes to those they tried in Japan.

What are some of the standout dishes on the menu?

Our guests always favour our sushi assortment, specifically Tokujyo Sushi (Chef's selection of ten sushi varieties). We are one of the few Japanese restaurants in the UAE that serve this number of sushi, as the quality has to be incredibly high to do so. Some of our standout dishes are Gindara Saikyoyaki (Grilled, slightly sweet miso flavoured codfish), Tempura Moriawase (Assorted deep-fried, lightly battered seafood and vegetable), Halal tantan ramen (Egg noodles with spicy minced chicken in miso flavoured soup) and Matcha roll cake (Rolled green tea cake).



Where do you source the ingredients from?

Our ingredients are mainly from Japan. We also use produce from neighbouring counties, Europe, and the UAE. Cuttlefish and blue crab from this region are incredibly good for sushi and miso soup. The rest of our fresh fish comes directly from Tokyo, to maintain the premium quality. We can source fish at more affordable rates, here in the UAE, but we like to follow tradition and offer the best to our guests.

What makes TOMO standout?

Of course, the view from our restaurant is amazing, with full 360 views of the city. It's also one of the top venues in Dubai to soak in a gorgeous sunset. I also want to mention that TOMO is the kind of restaurant that truly expresses what Japanese cuisine is really about. Throughout our culinary offerings, the décor and ambience, we embrace Japanese heritage. Food and friends are both integral elements of Japanese culture, not to mention, the preparation and presentation of the food as well. A great deal of thought goes into every item served, to really give our guests an authentic and memorable dining experience.

NEED TO KNOW

To make a reservation, visit tomo.ae or contact +9714 357 7888.

Tried & tasted

Our top dining experiences this month





Treat your Valentine

TAIKO DUBAI

Sited at the Sofitel Obelisk is this modern Asian restaurant and bar, the first international outpost of Taiko, an award-winning restaurant in Amsterdam by Executive Chef Schilo van Coevorden. The spacious venue is split into a bar and dining area with a dark colour scheme that adds to the ambience. Asian décor elements are noticeable through the robata grill and sushi bar, black pebble counters sourced from riverbeds in China, textured stoneware crockery, and a cherry blossom tree nestled at the centre of the dining space.

The highlights:

The culinary team aren't afraid to play with textures and ingredients, with each plate offering the perfect harmony of flavours. To whet our appetites, we ordered the signature special Infused melon, that's been the talk of the town ever since Taiko opened its doors here. Large cubes of wasabi and kimchi melon instantaneously brightened our palates, with the juices of the melon balancing the pungency of the wasabi and subtle spiciness from the kimchi. For an interesting take on hummus, try the edamame variation, best eaten scooped with the accompanying crunchy seaweed crackers. If you're going down the raw fish route, the Hiramasa king fish sashimi is a must-try. Slices of silky, fatty fish are topped with Persian saffron, pistachio and black lime. Another favourite was the Carpaccio of tender wagyu beef served with coconut pieces, mango and nam jim dressing. While the combination may sound strange, the blend of sweet, salty, spicy and sour notes makes it absolutely sublime.

Personally, I feel an Asian meal is incomplete without gyoza. Two that come in highly recommended are the Tiger prawn with kimchi and chilli oil and the Peking duck. Each dumpling is pillowy-soft with a generous filling brimming with robust flavours. The duck is reminiscent of Peking pancakes, with hoisin and soy-and lime-based sauces enhancing the protein. If you have space for entrées, try the succulent beef tenderloin, tender chicken yakitori and juicy lamb chops with a moreish bulgogi sauce. The chops boast just the right amount of fat and meat to sink your teeth into.

As for desserts, the Kakigori stole the show, with shavings of ice topped with passion fruit juices and cloud-like mochi. If you have room for one more, the banana spring rolls offer just the right amount of sweetness with a crisp shell, soft banana caramel inside and a side of guilt-free (or at least we're convinced it is) cashew ice-cream.

The verdict:

Taiko is without a doubt an intimate dining venue for date night. That said, the sharing-style nature of dishes makes it a great choice for a casual gathering too.

Book now: *Contact +9714 281 4010.*













AIZA, THE POINTE

At the very end of the East Marina at The Pointe, and up an elevator to a boho-chic terrace, is the warm, friendly and beautifully designed AIZA. The brightly lit indoor dining space is decorated with suspended wavy ceiling fabric to symbolise the forces of nature, reflecting where the sky and sea collide. The flooring, meant to resemble the pebble-lined streets of Greek-island towns, and the exposed illuminated stone at the bar, pay homage to the island's cliffs and instantly transports you to the Greek islands. Since the weather is absolutely gorgeous this time of year, take a seat at the terrace where the breeze beckons. Beautifully carved wooden tables beneath vibrant gorgeous pink flowers complement the views of the World's Largest Fountain and Atlantis, The Palm, in the distance.

The highlights:

My dining partner and I were greeted by pleasant staff, most of whom were Greek, who promptly took us through the culinary and social highlights of the evening. In no time, our table was covered with a spread of sharing-style mezze, starting with one of my favouites the Taramosalata (smoked cod roe). Best eaten with the accompanying pita or on its own, the authentic dish took me right back to the shores of Santorini. Next up was perfectly crisp salt and pepper calamari; a filling AIZA salad Cretan style with xynomyzithra cheese; and crunchy cheese pies that beautifully complemented the earthy flavour from the black truffle and Greek honey drizzled all over the top.



We took our time to unwind, sipping innovative concoctions with interesting ingredients such as peach spices, homemade biscuit soda and floral Greek honey, while taking in the stunning views of the surrounding Palm Island; a phenomenal sight from the terrace.

For mains, we chose grilled Tsipoura fillets with lemon, fennel and rocket salad; broccoli with chili, garlic and lemon oil; and a must-try lamb shank ladorigani. Despite the many culinary marvels, the lamb shank cooked in a Josper oven was the highlight of the evening, with perfectly seasoned, fall-off-the-bone tender meat served with roasted potatoes soaked in the juices. When dessert showed up by the end of our meal, we just couldn't say no. The molten chocolate cake with strawberries and vanilla ice-cream is a great dessert to end your meal with. To top off our Greek-filled experience, we were treated to a lively performance of the traditional Greek plate smashing – which you can participate in as well – and dances from the staff.

The verdict:

Authentic Greek-Mediterranean cuisine complete with beautiful views, music and interiors, AIZA is perfect for a date night or a fun evening out with friends.

Book now: *Contact +9714 575 5097.*







Family-dining

CZN BURAK

Instagram star and Turkish chef and restaurateur Burak Özdemir (nicknamed CZNBurak) has pulled out all the stops at the launch of his first Dubai restaurant outside Turkey. You won't miss this expansive space in Downtown Dubai, as it stands tall across Dubai Mall. Indoors, you can catch the chefs in action at the bustling kitchen, while out on the terrace, you're greeted with stunning unrivalled views of the Burj Khalifa. We chose to dine al fresco, to enjoy the cool winter breeze and take in the gorgeous surrounding views.



The highlights:

You need to build up an appetite before dining here. While sipping hot Turkish tea, we perused the menu on our phones, taking note of the signature specials with a "Show". A mezze trolley rolled over minutes later, for us to pick from a wide selection of vibrant appetizers. Our first picks were Creamy hummus, Cacik (yoghurt with cucumber, dried mint and olive oil) and Cabbage dolma, a great alternative to vine leaves, which features soft stuffed cabbage filled with a flavoursome mixture of rice and parsley cooked with lemon and pomegranate molasses. The Nurdagi salad followed, comprising a fresh mix of tomatoes, onions and parsley topped with walnuts for texture and a dash of lemon juice and pomegranate molasses for that tangy sweetness. Our server recommended the Acili Ezme (spicy pepper and tomato paste), which we absolutely loved, especially since it paired incredibly well with the mixed grill. The generously portioned platter of meat arrived on a heated gold grill with a marinated mix of tender lamb cubes, juicy beef kebabs, kebab with pistachi and charcoal-grilled chicken, served with tomato bulgur and sumac onion salad.

If you are looking for that Insta-worthy shot, we highly recommend one of the dishes with a Show (pictured above). A branded trolley rolled over to our side, where a white dome on fire was cracked open with a hammer. All eyes were on the performer as he tapped the dome to reveal the layer underneath, carefully pushing away the salted surface. The first layer of foil was then peeled off to expose the succulent slow-cooked lamb shoulder on a bed of basmati rice. We relished each morsel of the tender meat and grainy rice cooked with butter, pine nuts, slivered almonds, spices and black currant. The Acili Ezme and Cacik paired well with the lamb too, so we suggest saving some mezze for the meat.

Since we're huge fans of gooey Turkish ice cream, we ended the meal with a slice of baklava. The ice cream was twirled, stretched and placed at the core of the pistachio-stuffed pastry, before it was smashed down, flipped over and sliced into pieces. It's a dessert that perfectly completes your meal.

The verdict:

CZN Burak is a great spot to impress friends and family visiting from out of town. Make sure to take at least two to three people along, as the portions are incredibly generous.

Book now: *Contact 800 296 28725.*



THE CHEESE FACTOR

High-quality cheeses from the USA are increasing in demand in the Middle East. Here Nina Halal from the USA Cheese Guild discusses consumption behaviour and shares top tips for your cheeseboard



The United States is the world's largest supplier and manufacturer of high-quality cheeses which includes varieties ranging from American Originals such as Monterey Jack, Colby and cream cheese to Italian-style cheeses such as parmesan, provolone and mozzarella. Consumers are often surprised to learn that specialty cheeses from the country are some of the world's best, winning top awards at international competitions. The USA cheese community's success is reflected in the performance of USA cheese at the 2019 World Cheese Awards (WCA), one of the most respected competitions in the world attracting thousands of entries each year, where U.S. cheesemaker Rogue Creamery's Rogue River Blue was crowned World Champion Cheese - the first American recipient of this honour.

"USA cheese fits into healthy eating plans for children and adults of all ages. It's considered a nutrient-dense food because it provides a high concentration of nutrients relative to calorie content. It also boasts high-quality calcium, protein, phosphorus, vitamin A and zinc," says Nina Halal from the USA Cheese Guild.

For those who find it difficult to digest lactose found in milk and other dairy products, USA cheese(s) are a particularly significant nutrient source. "Natural cheeses such as cheddar, Colby, Monterey Jack, mozzarella and swiss contain minimal amounts of lactose, as the cheesemaking process naturally removes lactose during the separation of cheese curds from whey," says Nina. While cheese also contains some sodium, fat and calories, dietary choices should take into consideration a food's total nutrient package.

Traditionally, the most popular types in the GCC are the indigenous white cheeses, consumed daily at breakfast and throughout the day in snacks and sandwiches. There are over 1,000 cheese varieties produced in the United States, with parmesan and provolone cheesemakers also present in the country. You may have already tried a few of these, perhaps even all, without realising those delish soft, semi-soft and hard cheeses aren't from an artisan producer in France, Italy or Switzerland, but from the United States.

Create the perfect cheeseboard

Make your dinner party platter extra special with these nifty tips

- Mix semi-soft (Colby, medium cheddar, etc.), smoked and flavoured (Pepper Jack, smoked cheddar, etc.) and young Blue cheeses (gorgonzola, etc.). These are best consumed at room temperature to enjoy their soft and creamy texture.
- Include semi-hard cheeses - opt for sharp cheddar and Alpine-style cheese - and a hard parmesan. These cheeses are also best consumed at room temperature as they release all their essences while retaining body and structure.
- Pair it with similar flavours. For example, parmesan with fresh pineapple. For contrasting pairings, combining two or more of the five basic tastes (bitter, sweet, salty, sour, and umami). feta paired with fresh watermelon (salty and sweet), Pepper Jack paired with mango chutney (umami and sweet), and parmesan with walnuts (sour, salty, and bitter) are great options.
- Complete your cheeseboard with contrasting textures including dried and fresh fruits, nuts, cured meats, pickles, condiments, jams, honey, bread and crackers.





Currently, within the MENA region, there's a growing appreciation for new types of USA cheese, not just for special occasions but also for daily consumption and homemade recipes. To meet consumer demand, dairy research centres in the United States are currently developing novel cheese prototypes and processes that allow better control over production, safety, shelf life, flavour, and more. For instance, the invention of IQF (Individually Quick Frozen) mozzarella. "The IQF process locks in the freshness of the cheese and stops the ageing process, providing foodservice and industrial users with a consistent, high-quality product," says Nina. Other processes include new ways to modify cheese texture and performance for specific end uses. Meanwhile, low pressures can accelerate cheese flavour development and reduce ripening time. "Innovation in American cheesemaking manifests itself through never-ending new creations of our talented cheesemakers."

Keep in mind!

A simple guide

1. Don't offer cheese straight from the chiller. It should always be at room temperature. Remove from the chiller around one hour prior to serving.
2. Refrain from offering the same varieties; try to discover new cheeses and flavours.
3. Go ahead and slice or chunk the cheese.
4. Notice the aesthetics. Prep in advance for beautiful arrangements.
5. Remember to advise your guests to start with the mildest cheese and then work up to the most intense.

Over the last two years, the USA Cheese Guild has featured a wide variety of American cheesemakers, introducing more of the produce to shelves and deli counters of major supermarket chains, not just in Dubai, but throughout the GCC. "This is due to the noticeable shift in consumption behaviour, which has helped to leverage the rising demand for USA cheese," says Nina.

Cheese as a health food and snack is gaining traction here, especially since people are more aware of the heritage and cheesemaking processes. "In today's U.S. cheesemaking community, craftsmanship rules. From some of the largest production facilities in the world to tiny artisan producers, quality is at the forefront of USA cheese," says Nina. Across the rolling hills of New England and the green pastures of Wisconsin to the canyons of Utah and the dramatic landscapes of California, farms both big and small participate in the first livestock animal care program in the world to be recognized by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). U.S. milk production oversight and government regulations have furthermore resulted in a reputation for products that are safe, nutritious, and delicious.

FUN FACT!

Monterey Jack was first made in the mid-1700s near present-day Monterey, California. Though it was one of the earliest produced cheeses, the commercial development of the cheese didn't happen until the late 1880s, when a businessman from Monterey, David Jacks, started selling it all over California. The cheese, labeled with Jack's name and the city of origin, came to be known as Jack's Monterey, which later became "Monterey Jack."



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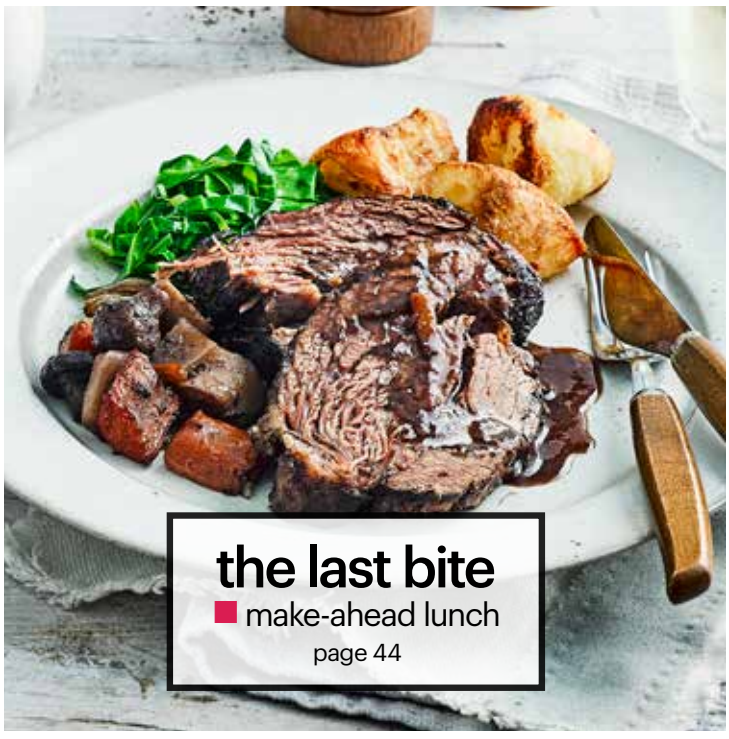
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easiest ever midweek meals

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the last bite

make-ahead lunch

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CHEESE OF EUROPE
ANYTIME, ANYWHERE, ANYHOW

Rendez-Vous with the cheeses of France

A cheese lover's menu

Rustle up the perfect Valentine's Day meal at home with this decadent menu that features cheese in every course

Simple mushroom tart

SERVES 2-4

1 pack puff pastry
2 portobello mushrooms
4 tbsp Boursin cheese
2 tbsp olive oil½ tsp crushed black pepper
1 tsp pink salt
1 tbsp fresh thyme
4-5 sundried tomatoes, sliced

1. Preheat the oven to 175C.
2. On a floured surface, roll out the pastry dough to a large rectangle and place on a large pan.
3. Transfer the pastry, with the paper, to a baking dish. Score a rectangle two finger-widths from the edge, not cutting entirely through the pastry. Fork the pastry all over the inside of the marked edge. Place the pastry in the pre-heated oven and bake for 15 mins. Remove from the oven and let it cool.
4. Spread the boursin cheese on the base.
5. Add the sliced portobello mushrooms and sundried tomatoes on top. Sprinkle salt, pepper and thyme and drizzle olive oil all over.
6. Bake at 185C for 15 mins or until golden.

Fourme d'Ambert pasta sauce with Comté walnut crumble

SERVES 2-4 P



1 pack chicken broth
270g Fourme d'Ambert
1½ cup cream
2 tbsp butter
½ tsp pink salt
¼ tsp crushed black pepper
2 cups spinach, chopped
80g chorizo
¼ cup Comté
3 tbsp parsley, chopped parsley
200g spaghetti

WALNUT CRUMBLE

1 tbsp butter
4 tbsp walnuts, chopped
2 tbsp Panko breadcrumbs
1 sprig of thyme
2 tbsp Comte

1. Using a garlic clove, wipe the pan all around (before turning on the heat).
2. Simmer the chicken broth on low heat for 10 mins. Add the blue cheese. Once it melts, add the cream and butter.
3. In a frying pan, dice the chorizo and sauté for 3-4 mins until crispy. Add this to the cheese sauce and follow with two cups of chopped spinach.
4. For the walnut crumble, melt butter in a pan. Add the crushed walnuts, panko breadcrumbs, thyme and Comté.
5. Add the spaghetti to the cheese sauce and turn off the heat. Combine thoroughly, top with the walnut crumble and garnish with chopped parsley.



Comté X Maamoul

3 triangular slices of Comté with rind
3 tsp date paste
1 large shortbread cookie
¼ tsp vanilla bean paste
3 tbsp pistachios, slivered
4 tbsp pistachios, ground

1. Slice a wheel of Comté into three triangular slices. Each slice should be 6cm in length and 0.5cm in depth.
2. Spread a generous layer of date paste evenly on two of the cheese triangles.
3. To make the vanilla crumble, crush the shortbread cookie and stir in the vanilla bean paste. It should integrate and disappear within the crumble, leaving only specks of vanilla behind.
4. Layer the vanilla crumble over the two slices of cheese topped with date paste. The sticky texture will act as a glue between the cheese and the crumble.
5. Sprinkle ground pistachio powder over the vanilla crumble.
6. Assemble the cheese triangles in layers similar to a cake. Garnish with slivered pistachios and serve.

30-minute meals

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Make nourishing, comforting dinners in no time

recipes ESTHER CLARK *photographs* MIKE ENGLISH



Creamy carrot soup with garlicky seeded croutons

SERVES 4 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 25 mins **EASY** V

1½ tbsp oil
1 onion, sliced
1 celery stick, sliced
3 garlic cloves, 2 crushed and 1 left whole
1kg carrots, thinly sliced
1.5 litre hot veg or chicken stock
½ small bunch of thyme
2 thick slices sourdough
1 tbsp mixed seeds
1 tbsp chopped parsley
1½ tbsp double cream, plus extra to serve (optional)

1 Heat 1 tbsp of the oil in a large saucepan or casserole pot. Fry the onion and celery gently for 5 mins. Add the crushed garlic and cook for 1 min more. Tip in the carrots, stock and thyme, season, then bring to the boil. Lower to a simmer and cook, covered, for 25 mins or until the carrots are softened.

2 Meanwhile, heat the oven to 220C/200C fan/gas 7. Rub the whole garlic clove over both sides of the sourdough. Tear it into rough chunks and toss with the remaining oil, a good pinch of salt and the seeds. Spread on a baking sheet and bake for 8- 10 mins, or until golden brown and crispy. Mix with most of the chopped parsley and set aside.

3 Remove the thyme from the soup and blitz with a hand blender until very smooth. Stir though the cream and season. Ladle the soup into four bowls, drizzle over a little extra cream, if you like, and scatter over the croutons and reserved parsley.

GOOD TO KNOW balanced • folate • fibre • iron • 2 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 417 kcals • fat 15g • saturates 5g • carbs 53g • sugars 19g • fibre 10g • protein 11g • salt 1.7g



Spicy cauliflower & halloumi rice

SERVES 4 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 20 mins **EASY** **V**

1 small head cauliflower (500g), broken into medium florets
150g baby spinach
1 tbsp rapeseed oil
1 red onion, sliced
120g halloumi, cut into cubes
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 thumb-sized piece ginger, finely grated
1 tsp ground turmeric
1 tbsp medium curry powder
2 x 250g pouches brown basmati rice
1 red chilli, finely sliced

1 Bring a large pan of salted water to the boil and cook the cauliflower for 5 mins over a high heat, adding the spinach for the final 2 mins. Drain and set aside.
2 Heat the oil in a large frying pan or shallow casserole dish and fry the onion over a medium heat for 5 mins. Turn up the heat, add the halloumi, cook for a further 5 mins, then add the garlic, ginger, turmeric and curry powder, and cook for 1 min more. Stir through the rice, cauliflower and spinach to warm everything through, adding 1 tbsp water if it looks a little dry. Season and scatter over the chilli.

GOOD TO KNOW balanced • calcium • folate • fibre • 2 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 337 kcals • fat 14g • saturates 6g • carbs 36g • sugars 5g • fibre 7g • protein 14g • salt 1g



Prawn, chorizo & butterbean bowls

SERVES 2 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 25 mins **EASY**

½ tbsp rapeseed oil
1 onion, thinly sliced
40g chorizo, finely chopped
1 large garlic clove, crushed
½ tsp hot smoked paprika
400g can tomatoes
400g can butterbeans, drained and rinsed
100g chard, chopped
100g prawns
½ small bunch of parsley, finely chopped
crusty bread, to serve

1 Heat the oil in a frying pan and fry the onion for 8 mins until softened. Add the chorizo and cook for 3 mins more, or until starting to brown. Stir in the garlic and hot smoked paprika and cook for a further 1 min.
2 Tip in the tomatoes, beans and chard, simmer for 10 mins, then add the prawns and cook for 3 mins more. Stir through the parsley and season to taste. Serve in bowls with some crusty bread alongside.

GOOD TO KNOW balanced • low cal • low fat • folate • fibre • vit c • iron • 3 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 339 kcals • fat 11g • saturates 3g • carbs 30g • sugars 14g • fibre 12g • protein 24g • salt 1.7g

Baked cod with creamy mushroom & leek orzo

SERVES 4 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 15 mins **EASY**

3 tbsp plain flour
4 cod loin fillets
2 tbsp olive oil
1 lemon, zested and sliced
½ small bunch of thyme
2 leeks, sliced
200g mushrooms, sliced
300g orzo
500ml low-salt stock
2 tbsp crème fraîche

1 Heat the oven to 220C/200C fan/gas 7. Tip the flour into a bowl and season. Dip each cod fillet into the flour until evenly coated. Heat 1 tbsp of the oil in a non-stick frying pan over a medium-high heat and fry the cod on each side for 2 mins, or until golden brown. Transfer to a roasting tin with the lemon slices on top and nestled in half the thyme. Bake for 10 mins.
2 Heat the remaining oil in a pan and fry the leeks and mushrooms for 5 mins on a medium-high heat. Tip in the orzo and stock, and cook for 10 mins over a high heat, stirring continuously until tender. Stir through the crème fraîche and lemon zest. Season. Serve the orzo with the cod on top, along with the roasted lemon slices.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • fibre
PER SERVING 571 kcals • fat 15g • saturates 6g • carbs 66g • sugars 4g • fibre 6g • protein 41g • salt 0.4g



Posh baked beans & eggs on toast

SERVES 2 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 25 mins **EASY**

1 tbsp olive oil
1 onion, sliced
1 small garlic clove, crushed
2 tsp smoked paprika
400g can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
400g can chopped tomatoes
½ tbsp soft brown sugar
1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
2 large eggs
2 large slices wholemeal bread
4 thin slices crispy pancetta or bacon (optional)

1 Heat the oil in a small saucepan and fry the onions with a pinch of salt for 10-12 mins over a medium heat, or until softened and starting to caramelise. Add the garlic and paprika and cook for 1 min more. Stir through the beans, tomatoes, sugar and Worcestershire sauce. Continue to cook for 10 mins over a medium heat, stirring regularly until reduced and saucy. Season.
2 Poach the eggs by bringing a large pan of salted water to the simmer. Stir the water using the end of a wooden spoon, then crack an egg into the swirling water as it's about to subside. Poach for 3 mins. Repeat the process with the second egg.
3 Toast the bread and top with the beans, eggs and some crispy pancetta or bacon, if you like.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low cal • fibre • iron • 3 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 439 kcals • fat 13g • saturates 3g • carbs 51g • sugars 20g • fibre 14g • protein 22g • salt 0.9g



Mustardy sausage & sprout gnocchi

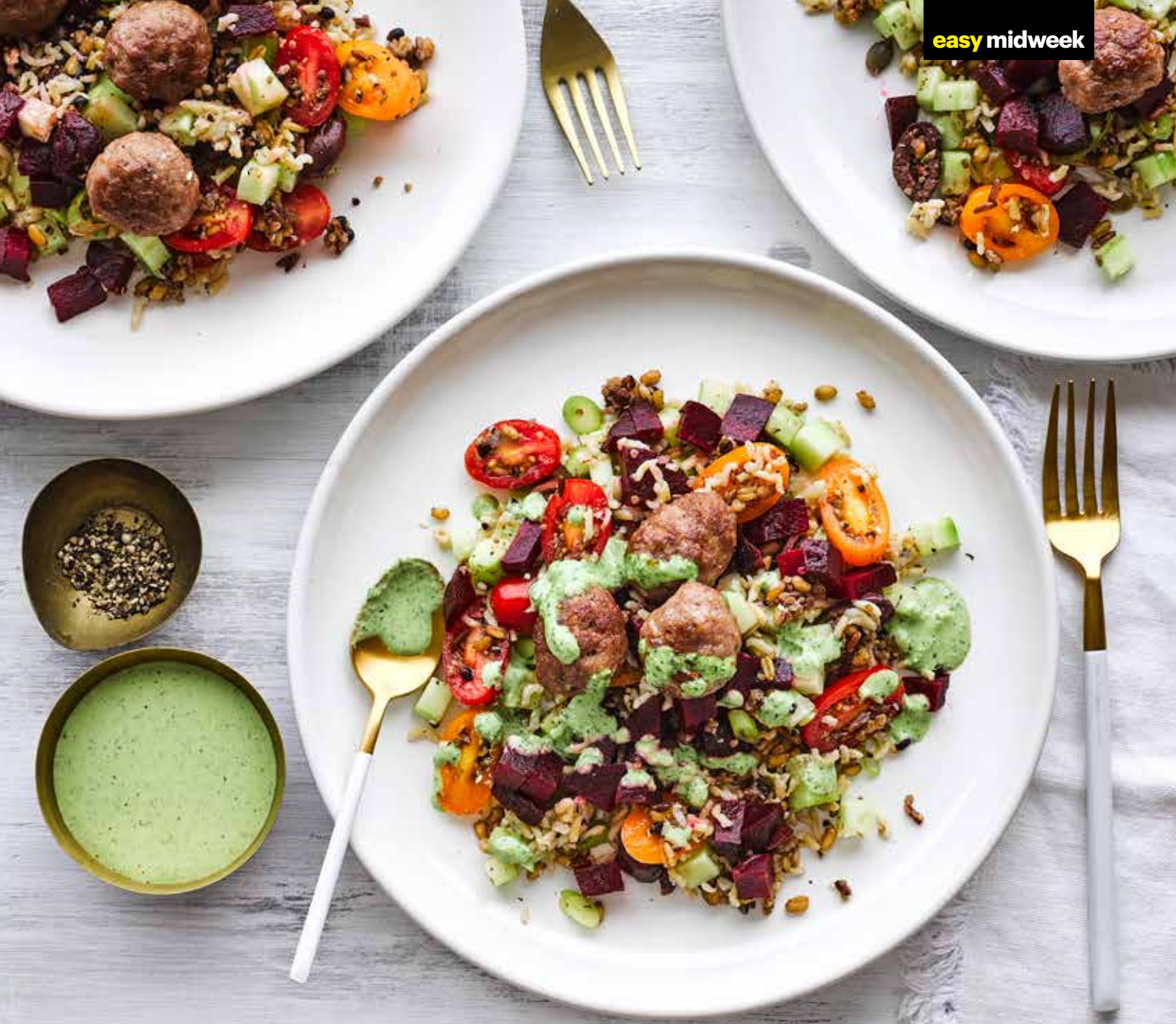
SERVES 4 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 20 mins **EASY**

250g gnocchi
1 tbsp olive oil
1 onion, thinly sliced
3 sausages (200g)
250g Brussels sprouts, shredded
100ml chicken stock
2 tsp wholegrain mustard
2 tbsp half-fat crème fraîche
½ small bunch of parsley, chopped, plus extra to serve
parmesan, grated (optional)

1 Cook the gnocchi in a pan of salted water following pack instructions. Drain and set aside.
2 Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large frying pan and fry the onion over a medium heat for 8 mins, or until softened and turning golden brown. Squeeze the sausagemeat out of the skins and into the pan, breaking it up with a wooden spoon. Cook for 5 mins until golden brown. Stir through the sprouts and cook for a further 5 mins until softened. Add the stock and mustard, and bring to the boil. Stir through the crème fraîche and parsley. Season. Tip in the gnocchi, tossing with 100ml water to loosen the sauce, and bring to a simmer for 3 mins. To serve, sprinkle with the extra parsley and parmesan, if you like.

GOOD TO KNOW balanced • fibre • vit c
PER SERVING 335 kcals • fat 17g • saturates 6g • carbs 30g • sugars 6g • fibre 7g • protein 12g • salt 1.6g

Shoot directorGILLIAN MCNEILL | Food stylist KATY GILHOOLY| Stylist FAYE WEARS



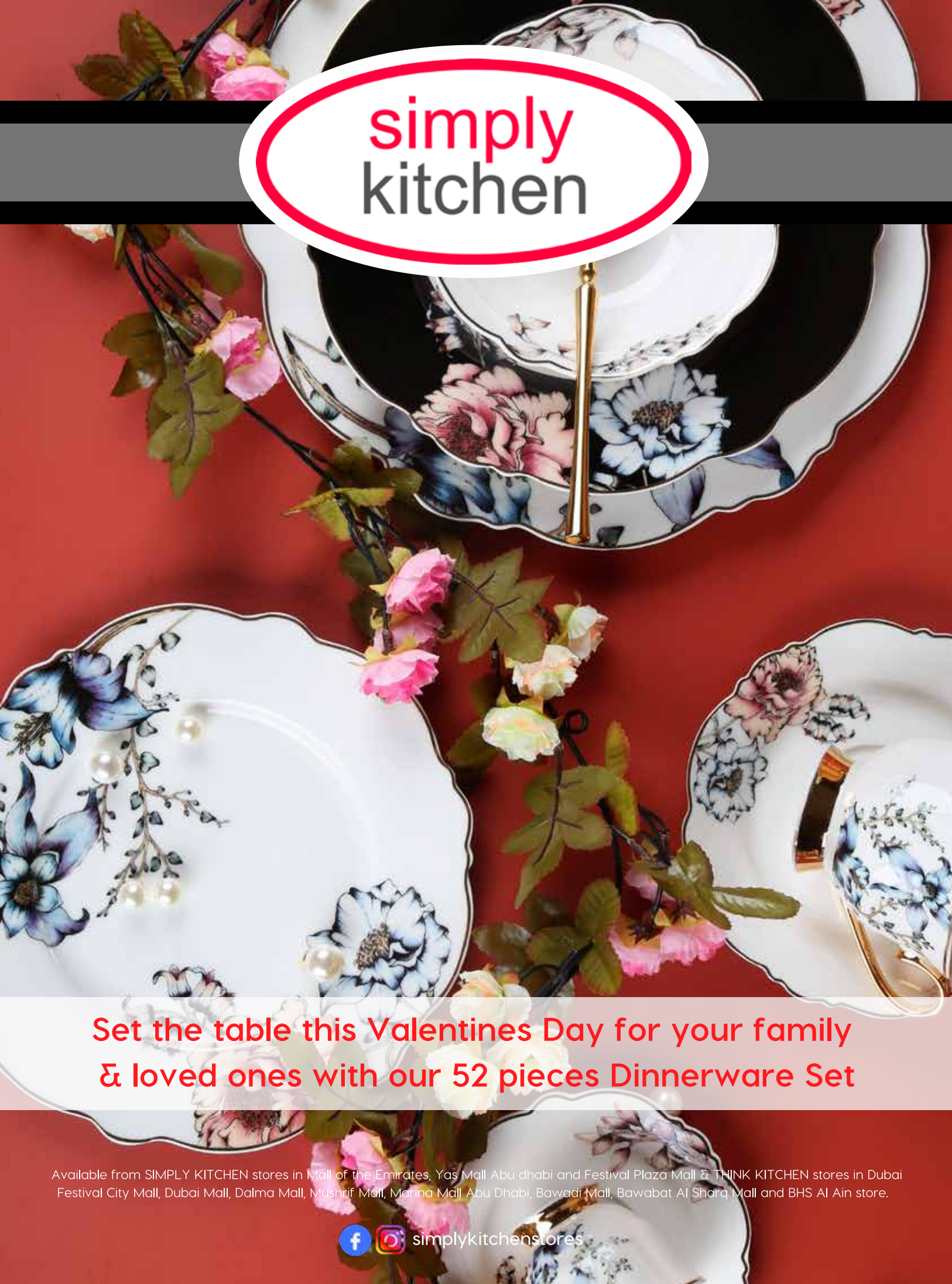
Lamb meatballs & green tahini tabbouleh

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 12 mins **EASY**

2 tbsp tahini
2 tbsp fat-free yogurt
½ small bunch of parsley
1 lemon, juiced
½ small garlic clove
½ tbsp rapeseed oil
10-12 ready-made lamb meatballs
2 x 250g pouches mixed grains
4 cooked beetroots, chopped
2 spring onions, sliced
200g baby tomatoes, halved
50g pitted black olives, halved
1 cucumber, peeled and cubed
½ tbsp za'atar

1 Blend the tahini, yogurt, parsley, lemon juice, garlic, 2-3 tbsp water and a pinch of salt in a food processor until smooth. Set aside.
2 Heat the oil in a non-stick frying pan and cook the meatballs over a medium heat for 10-12 mins until cooked through, turning regularly.
3 Warm the grains following pack instructions. Leave to cool a little, then toss with the remaining ingredients. Season. Divide the tabbouleh between four plates, top with the meatballs and drizzle over the tahini dressing.

GOOD TO KNOW balanced • fibre • 2 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 506 kcals • fat 23g • saturates 6g • carbs 47g • sugars 9g • fibre 9g • protein 24g • salt 0.9g



Set the table this Valentines Day for your family & loved ones with our 52 pieces Dinnerware Set

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Baking on a budget



Get drizzling, dripping and swirling with these fun, thrifty bakes. Whip up an easy, showstopping birthday cake or try new twists on old favourites like red velvet cookies or sticky toffee banana bread – with just a few clever tricks you can make them look extra special

recipes ANNA GLOVER *photograph* MIKE ENGLISH

Rhubarb & custard blondies

Blondies are brownies made with white chocolate instead of dark, and flavoured with vanilla instead of cocoa. Custard powder in the cake mix makes them extra fudgy and, if you don't have rhubarb, you can use any jam or compote – swirl through ready-made raspberry jam, or a homemade pear and apple compote for a crumble-inspired blondie.

SERVES 12 **PREP** 15 mins plus cooling
COOK 55 mins **EASY** **V** ❄

225g salted butter (or unsalted with a pinch of salt), plus extra for the tin
200g light brown soft sugar
100g caster sugar
150g plain flour
50g custard powder
½ tsp baking powder
3 medium eggs
250g white chocolate chips or white chocolate finely chopped
2 tsp vanilla extract

For the rhubarb & custard swirl
200g rhubarb (frozen, or canned and drained is fine)
75g caster sugar
pink or red food colouring (optional)
4 tbsp ready-made custard (from a carton is fine, or made up from powder)

1 For the rhubarb & custard swirl, put the rhubarb and sugar in a wide pan with 2 tbsp water (or omit the water if using canned rhubarb). Cook over a medium heat, stirring frequently for about 10 mins, until the rhubarb breaks down and turns jammy. Add a few drops of food colouring if you want a pink rhubarb swirl, but the flavour will still be great if you're using green-tinged rhubarb. Leave to cool.

2 Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Put the butter and both sugars into a pan and put over a low heat. Melt together until smooth and shiny, then remove from the heat, and leave to cool for 10 mins while you sieve the flour, custard powder and baking powder in a bowl. Butter a 20 x 30cm baking tin and line with baking parchment.

3 Beat the eggs into the cooled sugar and butter mixture, then fold in the dry ingredients until you have a smooth batter. Stir in 150g of the chocolate chips and the vanilla. Pour into the brownie tin, then use a teaspoon to swirl rhubarb compote on top of the batter. Add dollops of the custard, then swirl a skewer or cocktail stick through the compote to create a marbled pattern.

4 Bake for 35-40 mins until set and the edges are coming away from the sides of the tin, then leave in the tin to cool. Melt the remaining 100g chocolate in short blasts in the microwave or in a bowl set over a pan of simmering water. Use a spoon to drizzle the chocolate over the blondie in a zig-zag pattern. Cut into squares to serve. *Will keep for three days in an airtight container, or freeze the squares individually.*

PER SERVING 464 kcals • fat 24g • saturates 14g • carbs 57g • sugars 44g • fibre 1g • protein 5g • salt 0.6g



gf tip USING RHUBARB

- *Frozen or canned rhubarb is available all year round, but while in season, rhubarb can be picked up cheaply in bunches. It freezes well, too – just chop and put in a container in the freezer until you're ready to make a compote (without the colouring). You can spoon it over porridge, yogurt or make a crumble. It keeps for up to four days covered in the fridge.*



Chocolate & raspberry birthday layer cake

Like a Victoria sponge, but better. Frozen raspberries are much cheaper and last a lot longer than fresh, and when swirled into cream between chocolatey layers, who could resist a slice?

SERVES 12 **PREP** 20 mins plus cooling **COOK** 40 mins
EASY V ❄ sponges only

225ml sunflower oil, plus extra for the tins
250g caster sugar
3 large eggs
225ml milk
250g self-raising flour
4 tbsp cocoa
1½ tsp bicarbonate of soda

For the raspberry layer

150g raspberry jam
100g frozen raspberries, defrosted
300m double cream
2 tbsp icing sugar

1 Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Oil and line two round 20cm springform cake tins with baking parchment. Whisk the oil, sugar, eggs and milk in a bowl until smooth. Sieve the flour, cocoa and bicarb into another large bowl, then gradually mix in the wet ingredients.
2 Divide the mixture between the tins and bake for 35-40 mins until the cakes are risen and spring back when pressed. Leave to cool in the tins for 10 mins, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.
3 For the raspberry layer, stir the jam and the defrosted raspberries together. Once the cakes are cool, whip the cream with the sugar to soft peaks, then gently fold half the raspberry mixture through the cream to create a ripple effect.
4 Spoon most of the reserved raspberry mixture over one of the cakes, then dollop on half of the cream. Smooth over with a palette knife, then place the other sponge on top. Swirl over the remaining cream and swirl the last of the raspberry mixture through it.
Will keep in the fridge for two days.

PER SERVING 549 kcals • fat 36g • saturates 12g • carbs 49g • sugars 33g • fibre 2g • protein 6g • salt 0.6g

gf tip SIMPLE SWAPS

● *Making chocolate cakes and buttercream icing can be expensive when baking, but using vegetable oil instead of butter and cocoa instead of melted chocolate keeps costs down here. It means the cake also keeps well (it won't go stale if it's wrapped and left for a few days, or you can freeze the sponges to decorate later) and it creates a texture that ensures the layers will stack and slice beautifully for guests. Adding lashings of whipped cream looks lavish, but it's usually more cost-effective than making buttercream.*





Red velvet cookies

We've turned the popular cake into chewy cookies, complete with cream cheese icing. Baking them is much cheaper than buying a box of chocolates for Valentine's Day, and something homemade is always appreciated. Box them up to give as a gift, or make a batch of dough to keep in the fridge so impromptu guests can enjoy freshly baked cookies.



MAKES 16-18 **PREP** 20 mins plus chilling **COOK** 15 mins
EASY ❄ dough only

175g soft salted butter
200g light brown soft sugar
100g caster sugar
1 large egg
2 tsp vanilla extract
½-1 tbsp red food colouring gel, depending on strength
225g plain flour
25g cocoa powder
½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
150g white chocolate chips or chunks

For the drizzle
2 tbsp soft cheese
6 tbsp icing sugar

gf tips BEST BUYS

- *Chocolate chips can be cheaper than bars, but check for special offers.*
- *You only need a small amount of soft cheese for these cookies, but if you don't have any, a simple icing of milk or water mixed with sugar would work.*
- *Gel food colourings are best when baking, as they keep their colour when baked and less is needed to achieve a good result.*
- *Vanilla extract is cheaper than bean pastes or pods, but use whatever you have to hand.*
- *This dough keeps for a long time, so bake as many as you need and chill or freeze the rest so there's no waste.*

1 Beat the butter and sugars together with an electric whisk until pale and fluffy. Beat in the egg, vanilla and food colouring until you have a bright red batter. Sieve over the flour, cocoa and bicarb. Fold everything together to make a stiff evenly-coloured dough, then fold in the chocolate chips.

2 Put the dough on a sheet of baking parchment, fold the parchment over the dough and mould into a sausage shape about 6cm wide. Chill until ready to bake. *Will keep for a week in the fridge or one month in the freezer.*

3 Heat the oven to 190C/170C fan/gas 5. Cut the cookie dough into 1cm thick slices using a sharp knife and arrange on two large baking sheets lined with baking parchment well-spaced apart so they have room to spread in the oven. Bake in batches, keeping the unbaked cookies on the sheet in the fridge while the rest are baking.

4 Bake in the middle of the oven for 13-15 mins until the cookies are crisp at the edges, but still soft in the centre. Leave to cool on the baking sheet for a few minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Beat the soft cheese in a small bowl to a loose consistency, then stir in the icing sugar. Use a piping bag or spoon to drizzle the icing over the cookies. *Un-iced cookies keep for five days in an airtight container, or two days iced.*

PER BISCUIT 268 kcals • fat 12g • saturates 7g • carbs 36g • sugars 26g • fibre 1g • protein 3g • salt 0.3g





Lemon drizzle sponge pudding

We've turned a classic lemon drizzle cake into a self-saucing pud for a money-saving, retro dessert that is comfort food at its best. Sweetened lemon juice poured over just before baking thickens and puddles in the bottom of the dish to create the sauce. Serve straightaway, with cream or custard if you fancy. It's the perfect way to round off Sunday lunch.

SERVES 10 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 50 mins **EASY** V

250g soft butter, plus extra for the dish
380g caster sugar
4 eggs
250g self-raising flour
1 tsp baking powder
3 lemons, zested and juiced
2½ tbsp cornflour
custard or cream, to serve

For the drizzle
50g icing sugar
1 lemon, juiced and zested

1 Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Butter a 30 x 20cm deep baking dish.
2 Put the butter and 250g caster sugar in a bowl and beat for 5 mins until pale and fluffy. Whisk in the eggs, then sieve over the flour and baking powder and fold in until you have a batter. Stir in the lemon zest, reserving a little for decoration.
3 Spoon the sponge batter into the dish and smooth over the top.
4 Mix the lemon juice with the cornflour in a heatproof bowl to make a smooth paste. Mix the remaining 130g caster sugar with 300ml boiling water in a jug, pour over the cornflour mix and whisk until smooth. Pour this over the sponge. Bake for 45-50 mins until golden and set, and the sponge springs back when touched.
5 While the pudding is baking, make the lemon drizzle. Mix the icing sugar with enough lemon juice (about half of it) to create a loose consistency. Drizzle over the sponge while it's still warm and decorate with the reserved lemon zest. Serve straightaway with cream or custard.

PER SERVING 492 kcals • fat 23g • saturates 14g • carbs 66g • sugars 43g • fibre 1g • protein 5g • salt 0.9g



gf tip

QUICK LEMON CURD

● *Lemons are a cheap and easy ingredient to have on standby for a last-minute pudding. Combined with a bit of sugar and cornflour from the storecupboard, it creates a cheat's lemon curd that transforms a simple sponge into a crowd-pleasing dessert.*

Shoot director ELIZABETH GALBRAITH | Food stylist ELLIE JARVIS | Stylist SARAH BIRKS

Sticky toffee banana bread

Use up any overripe bananas to make this loaf cake that's been given an indulgent makeover with toffee sauce and nut brittle. Adding dates to the sponge batter also lends a jammy sweetness reminiscent of sticky toffee pudding, so you can serve it warm with extra toffee sauce and ice cream for an easy dessert as well as cutting it into slices for breakfast.

SERVES 10 **PREP** 25 mins plus cooling **COOK** 1 hr 15 mins
EASY **V** ❄ banana bread only

125g soft butter, plus extra for the tin
75g caster sugar
50g dark brown soft sugar
3 medium eggs
2 large ripe bananas, mashed
50g natural yogurt
200g plain flour
2 tsp baking powder
50g pitted dates, chopped (about 10)
50g pecans or walnuts, chopped (or mixed chopped nuts)

For the toffee sauce
100g light brown soft sugar
25g butter, cut into cubes
100ml double cream

For the banana & nut brittle
150g caster sugar
50g pecans or walnuts (or mixed nuts)
50g banana chips
½ tsp sea salt flakes

1 Heat the oven to 160C/140C fan/gas 3. Butter and line a 900g loaf tin with a strip of baking parchment.
2 Beat the butter and both sugars in a bowl for 5 mins with an electric whisk until really fluffy. Whisk the eggs, banana and yogurt in a separate bowl until mostly smooth, then whisk this into the butter and sugar mixture. Fold in the flour and baking powder until just combined, then fold in the dates and nuts. Spoon into the tin, smooth over the top and bake for 1 hr-1 hr 15 mins until a skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean. Leave to cool in the tin for 10 mins, then lift out using the strip of parchment. You can serve it warm now, or leave to cool completely on a wire rack. *Will keep for four days in an airtight container.*
3 Meanwhile, make the toffee sauce. Put the sugar in a heavy-based frying pan and melt over a medium-low heat until light golden brown and liquid – don't stir, just tilt the pan to melt the sugar. Carefully whisk in the butter until smooth, then pour in the cream slowly and bring to a bubble. Mix until the sauce is smooth and shiny. Pour into a heatproof bowl, cover and leave to cool to room temperature.
4 For the brittle, put the sugar in a frying pan with 2 tbsp water over a medium heat, stir briefly, then simmer for 10 mins until the caramel turns amber. Don't stir after the initial mix, just tilt the pan to get an even deep golden colour.
5 Meanwhile, line a baking tray with baking parchment. Carefully stir the nuts, banana chips and salt into the caramel, until well coated, then pour onto the tray. Tip the tray (or use a spoon) to make sure the nuts are in a single layer – or they will be harder to separate later. Leave to cool completely before breaking the brittle into shards.
6 Stir the toffee sauce to loosen if it's become stiff, or warm for a few seconds in the microwave (add a splash more cream if you need to), then drizzle over the cake so it drips down the sides. Top with the shards of brittle. *Will keep for two days in an airtight container.*

PER SERVING 464 kcals • fat 24g • saturates 14g • carbs 57g • sugars 44g • fibre 1g • protein 5g • salt 0.6g

gf tips MAKE A LITTLE GO A LONG WAY

- *Mixed nuts are the cheapest nuts to buy, but use whatever you have – just check the use-by date as they go rancid quite quickly. Hazelnuts, walnuts, almonds or peanuts all work well in this cake.*
- *A simple toffee sauce and brittle add extra flavour and texture to the cake using everyday, storecupboard ingredients.*
- *Banana bread keeps well in the freezer. Any extra sauce and brittle keeps for four days stored in separate airight containers.*





the last bite

Make-ahead lunch

Get this beef brisket in the slow cooker first thing in the morning to get a head start on your Friday roast *recipe* MIRIAM NICE *photograph* MIKE ENGLISH

Slow cooker pot roast

SERVES 6-8 **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 7 hrs 30 mins **EASY**

- 2 tbsp sunflower oil
- 1.5kg rolled beef brisket
- 2 tbsp plain flour
- 3 carrots, chopped
- 3 celery sticks, chopped
- 2 parsnips, chopped
- 1 onion, chopped
- 80g button mushrooms
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 tsp English mustard
- 500ml non-alcoholic red wine
- 250ml beef stock
- roast potatoes and wilted greens, to serve

You will need
a 6-litre slow cooker

1 Heat the oil in a large pan. Dust the brisket with the flour, and season well. Put all the veg in the slow cooker, and turn it on to low. Sear the beef all over in the hot pan, then put it on top of the veg. Add the bay, garlic and mustard, then pour over the wine and stock. Cover with the lid and cook for 7 hrs.
2 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Carefully transfer the beef from the slow cooker to a baking tray, then roast for 20mins.
3 Meanwhile, carefully ladle the liquid from the slow cooker into a shallow pan. Boil rapidly over a high heat to reduce to a rich gravy. Serve the beef with the gravy, softened veg and some roast potatoes and wilted greens, if you like.

PER SERVING 470 kcals • fat 25g • saturates 9g • carbs 12g • sugars 5g • fibre 4g • protein 36g • salt 0.4g



Shoot director MIRIAM NICE | Food stylist KATY GREENWOOD | Stylist SARAH BIRKS

WEEKEND

Mouthwatering dishes to dig into with your family and friends over the weekend



ROSIE'S SEASONAL STARS

All-purpose pears, p52

ONE-PAN WEEKEND SAVERS, *p46*

gf

TOM KERRIDGE

ONE-PAN WEEKEND SAVERS

BBC chef **Tom Kerridge** uses inexpensive cuts of meat and clever tricks to make these all-in-one lunches

photographs SAM STOWELL

'We didn't have much money when I was growing up, but my mum always managed to put a Sunday roast on the table. Sometimes it was her famous sausage loaf, but other times she'd use cheaper cuts like the ones I've used in these recipes. As well as being good value, these cuts of meat often have more flavour – they just require a bit more effort than simply putting them in the oven to roast. The beauty is, you can add other ingredients to the pan to make a complete meal in one. I never felt like I was missing out as a kid just because we weren't eating prime cuts, and these recipes totally prove that point.' Tom



Tom Kerridge is a BBC presenter and chef-owner of The Hand and Flowers, The Coach and The Butcher's Tap in Marlow, Kerridge's Bar & Grill at The Corinthia Hotel, London and The Bull & Bear in Manchester. He returns to the BBC Good Food Podcast in March (see p109). See him live at the BBC Good Food Show Summer (p68) and his series, *Lose Weight and Get Fit,* continues on BBC Two. Tom is also a guest judge on BBC One's *Best Home Cook* at 8pm on 6 February. You can catch both series on BBC iPlayer.
@ChefTomKerridge

Spanish-style slow-cooked lamb shoulder & beans





Braised brisket pot roast

This is my favourite way to cook brisket. Brisket can be a bit tricky to time, as it could be tender in as little as three hours, so after that point, check it every 30 minutes.

SERVES 6 **PREP** 5 mins plus resting
COOK 3-5 hrs **EASY**

1 beef stock cube, crushed
1 tsp dried tarragon
2 tsp cracked black pepper
2kg rolled beef brisket
1 tbsp sunflower oil
500-550ml bottle of 0.0% dark ale
2 tbsp beef extract
1 tbsp muscovado sugar
2 tbsp dried onion flakes
500ml beef stock
long stem broccoli, to serve (optional)

1 Heat the oven to 150C/130C fan/gas 2. Mix the stock cube with the tarragon and pepper in a small bowl. Rub over the brisket and season. Heat the oil in a large flameproof casserole dish or roasting tin over a medium-high heat, add the brisket and brown well on all sides.
2 Stir in the ale and beef extract, then tip in the sugar and onion flakes and add enough of the beef stock to come two-thirds of the way up the sides of the brisket. Bring to the boil, cover and roast in the oven for 3 hrs, checking every 30 mins to see if the brisket is tender (but you may need to roast it for up to 5 hrs). Transfer the brisket to a board and leave to rest for 15 mins. Slice and serve with the stock spooned over and some steamed long stem broccoli on the side, if you like.

GOOD TO KNOW folate • iron
PER SERVING 713 kcals • fat 42g • saturates 17g • carbs 10g • sugars 9g • fibre 2g • protein 69g • salt 1.9g



Roast pork belly, fondant potatoes & pickled onions

Spanish-style slow-cooked lamb shoulder & beans

A roast can be so much more than just meat and two veg, as this recipe proves.

SERVES 8-10 **PREP** 20 mins
COOK 3 hrs 45 mins **EASY**

2.5kg lamb shoulder
1 tbsp olive oil
2 onions, roughly chopped
4 carrots, roughly chopped
1 garlic bulb, outer layers peeled and cut in half
500ml chicken stock
3 x 400g cans butter beans, drained and rinsed
460g jar roasted red peppers, drained and roughly chopped
300g jar pitted black olives, drained
4 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley

For the spice mix
4 garlic cloves, crushed
1 tbsp hot smoked paprika
4 tbsp olive oil
½ tsp dried rosemary

1 To make the spice mix, combine all of the ingredients together with a large pinch of salt. Slash the lamb shoulder all over with a sharp knife and rub in. If you have the time, marinate for up to 24 hrs, but this is not essential.
2 Heat the oven to 150C/130C fan/gas 2. Heat the oil in a large flameproof casserole dish or roasting tin over a medium-high heat, add the onions, carrots and garlic and sizzle for 5 mins until the onions and carrots are softened. Pour over the stock, then bring to the boil. Nestle the lamb in the pan and cover, then transfer to the oven and roast for 2 hrs.
3 Uncover and transfer the lamb to a plate using tongs. Stir the beans, peppers and olives through the stock in the pan, sit the lamb back on top and return to the oven, uncovered, for 1 hr 30 mins until the lamb is cooked through. Transfer the lamb to a board and shred using two forks. Stir the parsley through the braised beans before serving.

GOOD TO KNOW fibre • 2 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING (10) 597 kcals • fat 40g • saturates 15g • carbs 15g • sugars 4g • fibre 7g • protein 40g • salt 1g

Roast belly, fondant potatoes & pickled onions

This is one of my favourite roasts. The flavour is so good, I often use thick wedges of potato to act as a trivet under the meat – they lift the protein away from the tin so the skin crisps up, and they soak up all the juices.

SERVES 8-10 **PREP** 10 mins plus resting **COOK** 2 hrs 25 mins **EASY**

½ tsp dried thyme
½ tsp mace
1 star anise, ground to a powder using a pestle and mortar
1 tbsp sea salt flakes
2.5kg bone-in pork belly, skin scored
50g butter, softened, for the tin
12 medium Maris Piper potatoes
1 bunch of thyme
454g jar pickled onions, drained
125ml chicken stock

1 Mix the thyme, mace, star anise and sea salt flakes together in a small bowl. Rub all over the pork belly. If you have time, transfer the pork to a tray and marinate in the fridge for up to 24 hrs, but this is not essential.
2 Heat the oven to 220C/200C fan/gas 7 and butter a large roasting tin. Cut a thin slice lengthways from both sides of each potato, then sit them flat in the prepared tin in one even layer. Scatter over the thyme and onions, then pour over the chicken stock.
3 Sit the pork on top of the potatoes, skin-side up and roast for 30 mins. Reduce the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4 for 1 hr 30 mins, until the skin is crisp. Transfer the pork to a board, then cover loosely with foil and leave to rest for 20 mins.
4 Return the tin with the potatoes to the oven and increase the oven temperature to 200C/180C fan/gas 6 for 25-30 mins until crisp. Carve the pork into generous squares (you can use a bread knife to do this more easily) and serve alongside the fondant potatoes and caramelised pickled onions.

PER SERVING (10) 609 kcals • fat 42g • saturates 15g • carbs 15g • sugars 1g • fibre 2g • protein 42g • salt 2.3g









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ROSIE'S SEASONAL STARS

ALL-PURPOSE PEARS

With a mellow sweetness, this orchard fruit works well in sweet and savoury dishes. **Rosie Birkett** shares her favourite new ideas for cooking with pears *photographs* TOM REGESTER

I think I've underestimated the power of the pear in the past. It's easy for them to be neglected come autumn when the British apples barrel in with their jazz hands, all crunch, juice and acidity. But this gentler, more mellow orchard fruit has unique charms that lend it not just to eating – ripe and juicy in its own right – but for teaming with other seasonal ingredients, too. There are many wonderful things you can do with pears, both sweet and savoury.

When we inherited our overgrown allotment from the plotholders before us, we were excited to discover a small Williams pear tree on it. Williams is one of the most iconic pear varieties, with a fat-bottomed bell shape, golden skin with red freckles, and juicy flesh. I had vague dreams about distilling my own Poire Williams to fuel future dinner party discos, but in fact, we're yet to enjoy its fruits, thanks to the pilfering hands, claws or paws of some unknown predatory pear addict who manages to swoop in and harvest the bounty each year before we do.

We did plant our own pear tree in front of our London flat when we first moved in, but as yet, it's only provided one mean, rock-hard fruit. My hope is to one day grow an abundantly fruiting pear tree of my own – espaliered, like they do in walled castle gardens. If you're lucky enough to have your own, these recipes will provide you with some new inspiration for how to use its fruit. If you're buying pears to use, look out for the superior-flavoured Doyenne Du Comice, Conference or Concorde, as well as the Williams.

There's an unexpected complexity to the flavour of really good pears that thrills me once the season is upon us. Far from one-dimensional, they offer aromatic, beautifully balanced notes. This, along with their honeyed sweetness and sometimes slightly astringent skin, means they pair well not just with creamy, sharp cheeses and acidic fruits, but with the tannic notes found in walnuts, bitter leaves and chocolate.

A classic combination is the French salad of pear, chicory, walnut and roquefort. It's something I'll always order if I see it on the menu in a brasserie or bistro. It's an inspired balancing act of flavour and texture, and it's certainly influenced the tart here, though I've used gorgonzola dolce as I prefer its butteriness and acidity with the pears. There are ground walnuts in its short pastry, as well as walnut halves in the tart, plus earthy chard leaves. The roasted pears offer a wonderfully sweet contrast. The slight fruitiness of gorgonzola works well, but it's also good with other washed-rind cheeses, such as livarot, or British riseley.

While I've often roasted pork with apples in the past, pears are a beautiful accompaniment to sumptuous roasted belly – the sweet fat renders and melds with the cider, star anise and fruit in the recipe to create something rib-sticking and fragrant. The crumble recipe, also on that page, is autumn comfort in a dessert. Blackberries bring a sharpness and burst of purple that melds with the buttery, soft pear, while the topping is spiked with warming spices and crunchy nuts and seeds. The bay-infused custard is an optional extra that adds one final aromatic flourish, and elevates this to a dinner-party-worthy sweet.



Good Food contributing editor Rosie Birkett is a food writer and stylist, and a regular on BBC One's *Saturday Kitchen*. Her latest book, *The Joyful Home Cook*, is out now (HarperCollins).
@rosiefoodie



Pork belly with bay, cider & pears



Pear, walnut & blue cheese tart

This makes an ideal starter, lunch, light supper, or cheese course.

SERVES 6 **PREP** 25 mins plus 1 hr chilling and cooling **COOK** 1 hr 5 mins **MORE EFFORT** V

For the pastry

50g walnut halves
150g plain flour
80g cold unsalted butter, chopped
1 egg yolk

For the filling

1 tbsp butter
1 tbsp olive oil, plus an extra 1-2 tsp
4 shallots, sliced into half-moons
small bunch of sage, finely chopped
200g chard, stalks finely chopped and leaves roughly chopped
2 pears, halved, cored and sliced
3 large eggs
grating of nutmeg
150g crème fraîche
150g gorgonzola dolce or vegetarian alternative, torn into bite-sized pieces
50g walnut halves

1 To make the pastry, blitz the walnuts in a food processor until they resemble breadcrumbs. Add the flour and a large pinch of salt. Pulse briefly to combine, then add the butter and pulse until it resembles large crumbs. Add the egg yolk and pulse until the dough comes together (add 1 tbsp cold water if it seems dry). Squash the dough into a disc, then wrap in baking parchment and chill for at least 30 mins.

2 Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 5. Heat the butter and 1 tbsp oil in a heavy-based frying pan or skillet over a medium heat, and cook the shallots, sage and chard stalks for 5-8 mins until soft and starting to caramelise. Add the chard leaves and continue to cook until wilted, then remove from the heat.

3 Put the chilled pastry between two sheets of baking parchment and roll out to the thickness of 2.8mm. Use it to line a 20cm tart tin, then chill for 30 mins until firm. Toss the pear slices in 1-2 tsp oil on a baking sheet.

4 Scrunch up a sheet of baking parchment and use it to line the pastry case, then fill with baking beans. Bake for 15 mins, alongside the pears. Remove both from the oven. Remove the parchment and beans from the pastry case, then bake for 8-10 mins more, until the bottom is golden and crisp.

5 Lightly beat the eggs in a bowl, then season with some nutmeg and whisk in the crème fraîche. Stir in the cheese. Pour half the mixture into the tart case, then layer in two-thirds of the chard mixture. Arrange the roasted pear slices and remaining chard mix on top, then pour over the remaining custard. Dot over the walnut halves, then bake for 28-30 mins, or until golden and cooked through. Leave to cool for 20 mins, then slice and serve.

GOOD TO KNOW calcium • 1 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 614 kcals • fat 48g • saturates 23g • carbs 28g • sugars 7g • fibre 4g • protein 16g • salt 0.8g



Pear & blackberry crumble with bay leaf custard

Pork belly with bay, cider & pears

SERVES 6 **PREP** 15 mins plus 4 hrs curing and resting **COOK** 2 hrs **EASY**

1½kg pork belly, skin scored
rapeseed oil, for drizzling
1 carrot, roughly chopped
1 celery stick, roughly chopped
1 white onion or 4 shallots, roughly chopped
1 star anise
3 bay leaves
2 pears, cored and quartered
200ml non-alcoholic dry pear cider
1 tbsp plain flour
roast potatoes and steamed greens, to serve (optional)

For the rub
3 tsp sea salt flakes
1 tsp fennel seeds
1 tsp white peppercorns

1 To make the rub, put the ingredients in a pestle and mortar and crush together. Reserve ½ tsp of the rub and set aside. Cut some slashes into the underside of the pork using a sharp knife, then pat the rub all over the flesh, avoiding the skin. Put on a plate, skin-side up, and leave to cure in the fridge for at least 3 hrs.
2 Remove the pork from the fridge at least 30 mins before cooking so it comes to room temperature. Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Pat the reserved rub over the pork skin, and rub a little rapeseed oil all over. Put the carrot, celery, onion, star anise and bay leaves in a large flameproof roasting tin. Pour over a small glass of water, then place the pork on top, skin-side up. Roast for 1 hr 30 mins. Arrange the pears in the tin around the pork, coating them in the juices, and pour the cider into the tin, avoiding the pork skin (if the skin gets wet, you won't end up with crisp crackling). Turn the oven up to 220C/200C fan/gas 7 and roast for a further 15-20 mins. The pork skin should be crisp, and the pears glazed in the juices. Remove the pork from the tin. Leave to rest for 45 mins.
3 Transfer the pork to a serving platter. Gently lift the pears out of the tin and arrange next to the pork. Discard the carrot, celery, onion and bay, then skim some of the fat from the surface of the juices (you can transfer this fat to a jar and use it for cooking roast potatoes, or making rillettes, and more).
4 Put the roasting tin with the skimmed juices on the hob over a medium heat. Sprinkle in the flour and whisk it into the juices until smooth and thickened. Add a splash of hot water if it becomes too thick. Pour the gravy into a warm jug. Cut the pork into portions with a sharp knife, then serve with the roasted pear quarters, the gravy, and some roast potatoes and steamed greens, if you like.

PER SERVING 547 kcals • fat 37g • saturates 12g • carbs 9g • sugars 6g • fibre 2g • protein 42g • salt 2.8g

Pear & blackberry crumble with bay leaf custard

SERVES 6 **PREP** 15 mins plus standing **COOK** 45 mins **EASY** **V**

For the filling
knob of butter, plus extra for the dish
6 large pears (Williams, Conference or Comice), peeled, cored and each sliced into 6 thick wedges
100g light muscovado sugar
½ lemon, juiced
pinch of ground cinnamon
100g blackberries

For the custard (makes 500ml)
2 egg yolks
225ml whole milk, plus a splash
1½ tbsp golden caster sugar
3 fresh bay leaves

For the crumble topping
120g plain or spelt flour
140g light muscovado sugar
100g jumbo oats
50g pumpkin seeds
40g flaked almonds
40g skinless blanched hazelnuts, chopped
½ tsp ground cardamom
½ tsp ground ginger
150g unsalted butter, melted

1 First, make the custard. Whisk the egg yolks in a bowl until just broken up – they shouldn't be frothy. Pour the milk and sugar into a saucepan and warm over a low heat, stirring to dissolve the sugar, until almost boiling. Add the bay leaves, remove from the heat, and leave to infuse for 10 mins. If the milk mixture has cooled after this time, briefly warm it up again until just steaming, then remove from the heat. Discard the bay leaves and pour a little of the mixture into the whisked egg yolks. Whisk in the splash of milk, then pour the yolk mixture into the milk pan, whisking continuously to combine. Cook over a low-medium heat, stirring constantly, until the mixture is thick enough to coat the back of a spoon, and silky smooth. Strain through a sieve and set aside. *The custard can be served warm or cold – you can chill it at this stage, or set aside to reheat later.*
2 For the crumble topping, combine the flour, sugar, oats, pumpkin seeds, almonds, hazelnuts, spices and a pinch of salt in a bowl, then pour over the butter. Mix well. Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6.
3 Butter a large ceramic baking dish. Combine the pears, sugar, lemon juice, cinnamon and knob of butter in a medium pan, then set over a low heat. Cook for 4-5 mins, gently stirring, until the pears have released some juice and are slightly softened, but not falling apart. Remove from the heat and tip into the dish along with half the cooking juices released into the pan. Dot the blackberries among the filling.
4 Scatter the crumble topping all over the filling, then bake for 25-30 mins until golden, crisp and bubbling at the edges. Leave to stand for 10 mins before serving with the custard, alongside the remaining pan juices.

GOOD TO KNOW fibre • 1 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 813 kcals • fat 42g • saturates 19g • carbs 92g • sugars 64g • fibre 8g • protein 12g • salt 0.2g

Shoot director JACK HUNTLEY | Food stylist ESTHER CLARK | Stylist AGATHÉ GITS

family

PANCAKE PARTY

Make the most of Shrove Tuesday on February 16 with sweet and savoury pancake recipes for the whole family to enjoy

recipes CASSIE BEST *photographs* MIKE ENGLISH





First, make the pancake batter

Easy pancakes, two ways

This basic pancake mix can be used to make sweet or savoury pancakes, with enough for main course and dessert for a family of four. Rest the batter for at least 30 mins before cooking.

MAKES 8 large pancakes
PREP 5 mins plus resting
COOK 20 mins **EASY** V

175g plain flour
3 large eggs
450ml milk
sunflower oil, for frying

1 Weigh the flour in a large jug or bowl. Crack in the eggs, add half the milk and a pinch of salt. Whisk to a smooth, thick batter. Add the remaining milk and whisk again. Set aside for at least 30 mins. *Will keep in the fridge for up to one day.*
2 Heat a large non-stick crêpe pan or frying pan. Add a drizzle of oil, then wipe out the excess with kitchen paper. When the pan is hot, add enough batter to just cover the surface, swirling it and pouring any excess back into the bowl. The pancake should be as thin as possible. When the edges are peeling away from the sides of the pan, shake it to see if the pancake easily releases and is browning on the underside. If not, cook a little longer. Flip and cook the other side for a minute or two. Serve, or keep warm in a low oven.

PER SERVING 161 kcals • fat 6g • saturates 2g • carbs 19g • sugars 3g • fibre 1g • protein 7g • salt 0.2g

Then choose savoury or sweet...

SAVOURY

Spinach & ricotta pancake bake

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 35 mins **EASY** V

1 tbsp olive oil, plus a drizzle
3 garlic cloves, crushed
400g can chopped tomatoes
200g bag baby spinach
250g tub ricotta
grating of nutmeg
4 large pancakes or crêpes (see recipe, left)
225g ball mozzarella, drained and torn into small pieces
50g parmesan or vegetarian alternative, grated

1 Heat the oil in a pan, add 2 garlic cloves and sizzle for a few seconds, then tip in the tomatoes. Season, and bubble for 10-15 mins until reduced to a thick sauce. Microwave the spinach for 2 mins to wilt, or by tipping into a colander and pouring over a kettle full of hot water. When cool enough to handle, squeeze out as much liquid as you can, then roughly chop.
2 Heat the oven to 220C/200C fan/gas 7. Mix together the ricotta, spinach, a generous grating of nutmeg, the remaining crushed garlic and some salt and pepper. Spread the tomato sauce over the base of a shallow baking dish about 20cm x 30cm. Divide the spinach mixture between the pancakes, spreading it over half the surface. Fold each pancake in half, then in half again to make a triangle. Lay the pancakes on top of the sauce, scatter with the mozzarella and parmesan. Drizzle with a little more oil and bake for 15-20 mins until bubbling.

GOOD TO KNOW calcium • folate • 2 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 513 kcals • fat 32g • saturates 17g • carbs 25g • sugars 8g • fibre 2g • protein 30g • salt 1.1g





Blueberry cheesecake pancakes

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 10 mins **EASY** V

150g fresh or frozen blueberries
1 tbsp maple syrup
100g soft cheese
½-1 tbsp icing sugar, to taste
4 pancakes or crêpes (see recipe, opposite)
4 caramelised biscuits or ginger nuts, crushed
50g nuts (pecans or almonds work well), roughly chopped or crushed (optional)

Simmer the blueberries and maple syrup over a low heat until soft and syrupy, about 3 mins. Mix the soft cheese and icing sugar to taste. When the pancakes are cooked, top with blueberries, sweetened soft cheese, crushed biscuits and nuts.

PER SERVING 390 kcals • fat 22g • saturates 7g • carbs 35g • sugars 15g • fibre 2g • protein 10g • salt 0.4g





Buckwheat crêpe madames

Buckwheat flour is traditionally used in the popular galettes and crêpes of northern France. It gives a nutty flavour and is gluten-free, but you can replace it with regular wheat flour if you like.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 20 mins plus resting
COOK 30 mins **EASY**

80g buckwheat flour
5 medium eggs
250ml milk
2 tsp Dijon mustard
4 tbsp single cream
100g mature gruyère, comté or cheddar, grated
butter, for frying
100g ham, torn
fried mushrooms or steamed spinach, to serve (optional)

1 Mix the flour, 1 egg, the milk and a pinch of salt in a jug or bowl. Set aside for 30 mins, or up to 3 hrs. Mash together the mustard, cream and cheese in another bowl. Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6, and line two baking trays with baking parchment or foil.
2 Melt the butter in a large frying pan, then once foaming, add enough batter to just cover the pan, swirling it to cover the surface in a thin layer (pour any excess back into the batter bowl). Cook until the surface is set and the underside is browning, carefully flip and cook for another minute or 2, then take off the heat.
3 Spoon a quarter of the cheese mixture onto the middle of the pancake, using the spoon to create space in the centre to hold an egg. Crack one into the space and lay a few pieces of ham around the edges. Fold each side of the pancake in towards the centre to make a square. Cook in the pan for another 30 secs-1 min, then transfer to a baking tray. Repeat with the rest of the pancakes, then bake for 6 -7 mins until the egg whites are set. Serve with fried mushrooms or wilted spinach, if you like.

GOOD TO KNOW calcium • gluten free
PER SERVING 411 kcals • fat 25g • saturates 13g • carbs 20g • sugars 4g • fibre 1g • protein 25g • salt 1.7g



Cinnamon roll pancakes

SERVES 10 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 25 mins **EASY** **V**

145g self-raising flour
1 tsp baking powder
1 tbsp golden caster sugar
1 tsp cinnamon
2 eggs
40g butter, melted
140ml milk
3 tbsp light brown soft sugar
1 tbsp maple syrup, plus extra to serve (optional)
1 tbsp vegetable oil
6 tbsp toffee or caramel yogurt, to serve (optional)

1 Weigh the flour in a large jug or bowl. Add the baking powder, caster sugar, ½ tsp cinnamon and a generous pinch of salt. Whisk to combine. Crack in the eggs, add ½ the butter and all the milk, then whisk to a smooth batter. *Will keep in the fridge overnight.*
2 Stir the rest of the cinnamon, the light brown sugar and 1 tbsp maple syrup into the remaining melted butter. Add 3 tbsp of the pancake mixture and mix. Transfer to a squeezy bottle fitted with a small nozzle or a piping bag.
3 When you're ready to cook, pour a little oil in your largest frying pan, and wipe out any excess with some kitchen paper. Keeping the pan over a low-medium heat, spoon 2-3 tbsp mounds into the pan for each pancake, leaving space for them to expand as they cook. You should get three or four in at a time. Use the cinnamon mixture in your bottle or piping bag to pipe swirls on top of each pancake. When the pancakes start to set around the edges and you see bubbles appear on top, carefully flip and cook for another 2-3 mins until golden and cooked through. Keep warm in a low oven while you continue cooking the rest of the batter.
4 Serve the pancakes with yogurt and extra maple syrup, if you like.

PER SERVING 153 kcals • fat 6g • saturates 3g • carbs 21g • sugars 10g • fibre 1g • protein 3g • salt 0.4g

Shoot director RACHEL BAYLY | Food stylist KATY GILHOOLY | Stylist AMY KINNEAR



Mix & match pancake muffins

There's no need to stand over a hot hob flipping pancakes with this easy recipe for fluffy pancake muffins. Cook enough for the whole family in one go so you can enjoy them together. They're so simple to make, older kids can do it by themselves. Smaller children will need just a little help.

MAKES 12 **PREP** 20 mins
COOK 25 mins **EASY** V ❄

sunflower or vegetable oil, for the tin
350g plain flour
2 tsp baking powder
50g butter
350ml milk
2 eggs
2 tbsp maple syrup, plus extra to serve
handful of raspberries or blueberries, or a bit of each
½ banana, sliced
icing sugar, for dusting

1 Oil a 12-hole muffin tin generously, using a pastry brush to make sure you get in all the corners and up the sides. Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Mix the flour, baking powder and a pinch of salt in a bowl.
2 Melt the butter in a jug in the microwave. Add the milk, then the eggs and maple syrup, whisk together, then pour into the dry ingredients and whisk again to a smooth batter. Divide evenly between the holes of your tin.
3 Top each muffin with a few berries or slices of banana. Bake for 20-25 mins until golden brown. Test if the muffins are cooked by pushing a skewer into the centre of one. If it comes out clean, they're ready. If not, continue cooking for a few more minutes. Once cooked, cool for 5 mins, then remove from the tin with a cutlery knife. Pile onto a plate, dust with icing sugar and serve while still warm with plenty of extra maple syrup.

PER SERVING 188 kcals • fat 6g • saturates 3g • carbs 27g • sugars 4g • fibre 1g • protein 5g • salt 0.3g

Take 5 ingredients

A super-easy, thrifty version of a warming family favourite

recipe CASSIE BEST *photograph* EMMA BOYNS

Sausage casserole

SERVES 4 **PREP** 5 mins **COOK** 50 mins **EASY** ❄

8 sausages
500g bag frozen mixed Mediterranean veg
2 x 400g cartons tomatoes with garlic and onions
2 x 400g cans butter beans, drained
2 thick slices good, crusty bread

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Heat 2 tbsp vegetable, olive or rapeseed oil in a flameproof casserole dish with a lid. Add the sausages and brown until golden all over, then transfer to a plate.
2 Put the frozen veg in the pan and cook for a few mins to thaw. Add the tomatoes, then half-fill one of the cans with water and pour into the dish. Add the beans, season well and bring to a simmer. Place the sausages on top of the veg, cover with a lid and cook in the oven for 40 mins.
3 Heat 1 tbsp oil in a frying pan. Tear the bread into small chunks or coarsley grate it, making chunky crumbs. Fry in the hot oil until crisp. Serve the casserole in bowls, topped with the breadcrumbs.

GOOD TO KNOW calcium • folate • fibre • vit c • iron • 3 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 690 kcals • fat 38g • saturates 11g • carbs 52g • sugars 16g • fibre 13g • protein 29g • salt 1.6g

For this 5-ingredient recipe series, we assume you already have storecupboard staples like oil and butter

Shoot director GARETH JONES
Food stylist MYLES WILLIAMSON
Stylist TONY HUTCHINSON

health

Delicious recipes and top nutrition tips



feel-good gourmet

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perfect pizzas

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3 of 5-a-day

super soup, page 68

Perfect Pizzas

Pizzas aren't what spring to mind when you want a healthy option, but these three recipes are high in fibre and will contribute to your five-a-day

recipes SARA BUENFELD *photographs* MIKE ENGLISH

Cajun prawn pizza

HEALTHY · HIGH FIBRE · 3 OF 5-A-DAY

SERVES 2 **PREP** 10 mins **COOK** 20 mins **EASY**

For the base

200g wholemeal flour, plus extra for kneading
1 tsp fast-action dried yeast
2 tsp rapeseed oil, plus extra for oiling

For the topping

1 tbsp rapeseed oil
2 large celery sticks, finely chopped
1 yellow or green pepper, deseeded and finely chopped
225g can chopped tomatoes
1 tsp smoked paprika
165g pack raw peeled king prawns
2-3 tbsp chopped coriander
½-1 tsp Cajun spice mix
2 handfuls rocket (optional)

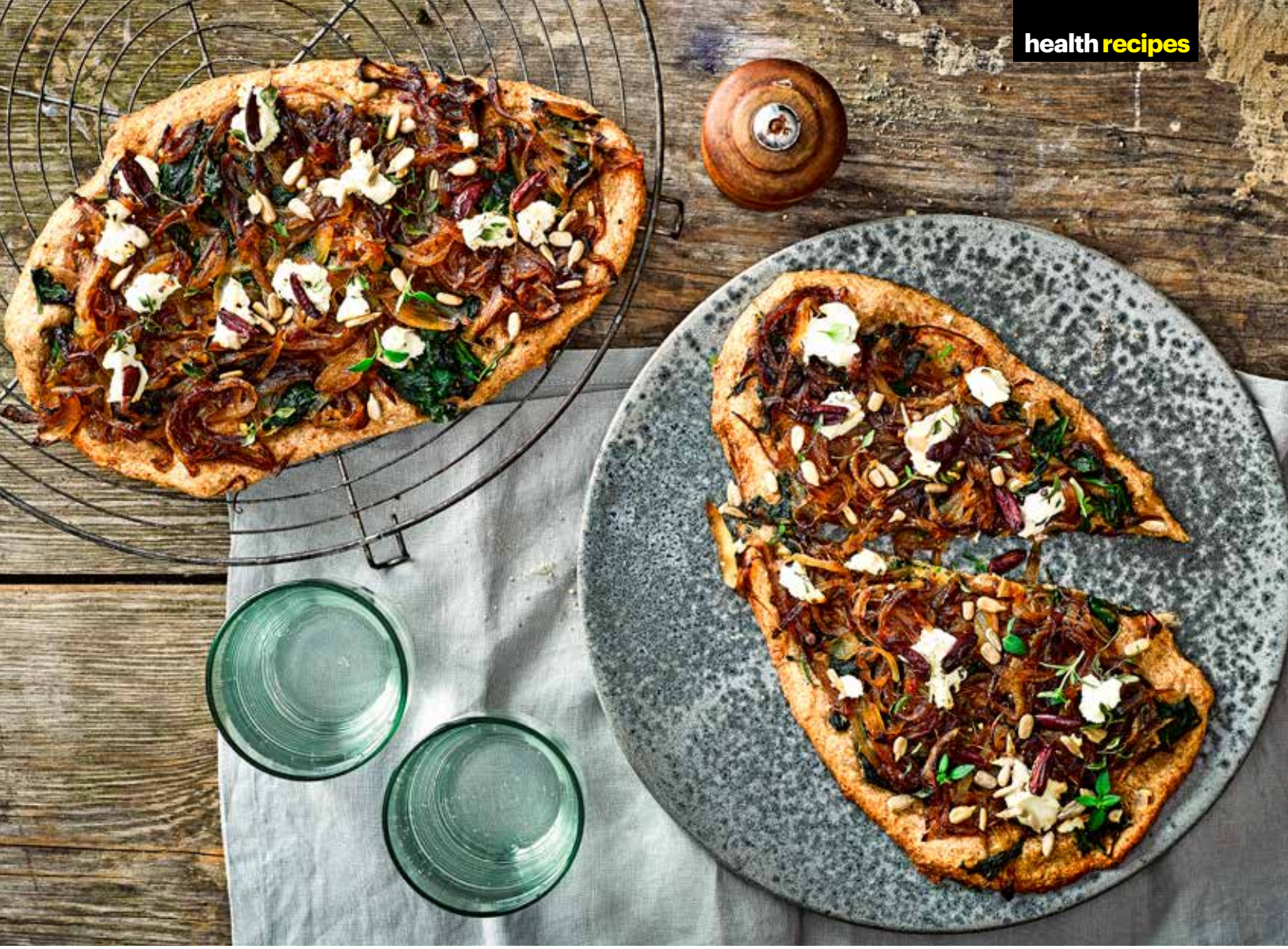
1 Heat oven to 220C/200C fan/gas 7. Tip the flour into a mixer with a dough hook or bowl, and add the yeast, ⅛ tsp salt, oil and 150ml warm water, then mix well to a soft dough. Knead in the mixer for 5 mins. If making by hand, tip onto a work surface and knead for 10 mins. Try not to add too much extra flour. Return to the bowl. Cover with a tea towel while you make the topping.

2 Heat the oil in a non-stick pan and add the celery and pepper. Fry for 8 mins, stirring, until softened. Tip in the tomatoes and paprika, then cook 2 mins more. Set aside to cool a little, then stir in the prawns.

3 With an oiled knife, cut the dough in half and shape each piece into a 25cm round with lightly oiled hands on oiled baking sheets. Spread each with half of the prawn mix, then scatter over the coriander and Cajun spice. Bake for 10 mins or until the base is cooked through, then top with the rocket, if you like.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low fat • folate • fibre • vit c • iron • 3 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 559 kcals • fat 12g • saturates 1g • carbs 75g • sugars 10g • fibre 15g • protein 31g • salt 0.9g

gf tip
You can add some cheese if you like, but your pizza won't be low-fat anymore



Caramelised onion & goat's cheese pizza

HEALTHY · HIGH FIBRE · 2 OF 5-A-DAY

This pizza is made without tomatoes, but if you like them, serve it with a tomato salad on the side.

SERVES 2 **PREP** 20 mins **COOK** 30 mins **EASY** V ❄

For the base

125g wholemeal flour, plus a little for kneading if necessary
½ tsp fast-action dried yeast
1 tsp rapeseed oil, plus extra for oiling

For the topping

2 onions, halved and thinly sliced
2 tsp rapeseed oil
2 tsp balsamic vinegar
160g baby spinach leaves (not the very tiny ones), chopped
2 large garlic cloves, finely grated
50g soft goat's cheese (or vegetarian alternative)
4 pitted Kalamata olives, quartered
few soft thyme leaves
1 tsp sunflower seeds

1 Heat oven to 220C/200C fan/gas 7. Tip the flour into a mixer with a dough hook or a bowl and add the yeast, ⅛ tsp salt, the oil and just under 100ml warm water, then mix well to a soft dough. Knead in the food mixer for about 5 mins. If making by hand, tip onto a work surface and knead for about 10 mins. The dough is sticky, but try not to add too much extra flour. Return to the bowl and cover with a tea towel while you make the topping.

2 Tip the onions into a non-stick wok and add the oil, 4 tbsp water and the balsamic vinegar. Cover with a saucepan lid that sits inside the pan so it's close to the onions, then cook for 15 mins, stirring about three times and replacing the lid quickly so as not to lose too much moisture. The onions should be golden and all the liquid gone. Tip onto a plate. Add the spinach and garlic to the pan and stir-fry until the spinach has wilted down.

3 Take the dough from the bowl and cut in half with an oiled knife, then shape each piece into a 25cm oval on a large oiled baking sheet with oiled hands. Don't knead the dough first, otherwise it will be too elastic and it will keep shrinking back.

4 Spread with the spinach followed by the onions, then dot with the cheese and scatter over the olives, thyme and sunflower seeds. Bake for 15 mins or until golden and the base is cooked through.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low fat • low cal • folate • fibre • iron • 2 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 443 kcals • fat 14g • saturates 5g • carbs 54g • sugars 9g • fibre 11g • protein 18g • salt 0.9g

Shoot director SALLY WILLIAMS | Food stylist SARA BUENFELD | Stylist FAYE WEARS

BBQ chicken pizza

CALCIUM · VIT C · 3 OF 5-A-DAY

If you would rather make individual pizzas instead of a family traybake, shape into four rounds, top and bake for 8-10 mins.

SERVES 4 PREP 25 mins COOK 30 mins EASY ❄

For the base

250g wholemeal flour, plus a little for kneading if necessary
1 tsp fast-action dried yeast
¼ tsp salt
1 tbsp rapeseed oil, plus extra for oiling

For the topping

pack of 3 peppers
1 large onion
1 tbsp rapeseed oil
1 tsp fennel seeds
2 tbsp BBQ sauce
2 tbsp tomato purée
1 large skinless chicken breast fillet (about 225g), diced
175g baby plum tomatoes, quartered
50g Applewood smoked cheese, grated

1 Heat oven to 220C/200C fan/gas 7. Tip the flour into a mixer with a dough hook or bowl and add the yeast, salt, oil and 200ml warm water, then mix well to a very soft dough. Knead in the food mixer for about 5 mins. If making by hand, tip onto a work surface and knead for about 10 mins. The dough is sticky, but try not to add too much extra flour. Return to the bowl, then cover with a tea towel while you halve and slice the peppers and onions.

2 Toss the peppers and onions with the oil and fennel seeds, then roast for 15 mins. Meanwhile, mix the BBQ sauce and tomato purée with 5 tbsp water.

3 Take the dough from the bowl and press into the base and up the sides of an oiled 25 x 35cm Swiss roll tin. Don't knead the dough first otherwise it will be too elastic and it will keep shrinking back. Spread with two-thirds of the BBQ sauce mix, then add the chicken to the remainder of the sauce in the bowl and toss well to coat.

4 Take the roasted pepper mixture from the oven and spread on top of the pizza. Scatter over the tomatoes, then evenly spoon over the BBQ chicken. Scatter over the cheese and bake for 15 mins or until the base is cooked. Serve with a salad or healthy coleslaw (visit *bbcgoodfoodme.com* for a recipe).

GOOD TO KNOW low fat • low cal • calcium • folate • fibre • vit c • 3 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 448 kcals • fat 11g • saturates 3g • carbs 54g • sugars 12g • fibre 11g • protein 27g • salt 1g



gf healthy diet

feel-good gourmet

Celebrate a special supper for two this Valentine's Day with an easy, flavourful dish that delivers four of your 5-a-day

recipe SARA BUENFELD
photograph ROB STREETER

Seared duck with ginger mash

SERVES 2 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 25 mins **EASY**

FIBRE | GLUTEN FREE | 4 OF 5-A-DAY

25g fresh ginger, peeled
small orange, zested and the juice of half
340g duck breasts, skin removed and halved lengthways
160g sweet potatoes, peeled and thickly sliced
125g potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
2 tsp rapeseed oil
1 onion, halved and thinly sliced
2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
160g broccoli florets
160g Brussels sprouts, peeled
1 tsp vegetable bouillon powder
few leaves fresh parsley or coriander (optional)

1 Cut 4 thin slices of the ginger and shred, then finely grate the remainder. Rub 1/4 tsp each grated ginger and orange zest into the duck breasts, then grind over plenty of black pepper and set aside. Put both types of potato into a steamer and cook for 15 mins until tender. Transfer to a bowl and add the remaining grated ginger, then blitz with a hand blender until smooth. Cover and keep warm.

2 Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large non-stick frying pan. Add the onion, garlic and shredded ginger and fry for 5 mins until softened and starting to turn golden. Push the onions to one side, add the duck and cook for 8 mins, turning frequently and stirring the onions occasionally. Lift the duck out of the pan and put on a plate to rest.

3 Put the broccoli and sprouts into the steamer and cook for 8 mins until tender. Meanwhile, make the sauce. Add 150ml water, 1/2 tsp orange zest and the bouillon to the onion mixture and bubble to a sauce, then remove from the heat and add the orange juice.

4 Smear the ginger mash onto two warmed plates and top with the duck. Spoon over the onions and drizzle over the sauce. Scatter with the parsley or coriander, if using, and serve with the broccoli and sprouts.

GOOD TO KNOW healthy • low fat • low cal • folate • fibre • vit c • iron • 4 of 5-a-day • gluten free
PER SERVING 407 kcals • fat 12g • saturates 3g • carbs 40g • sugars 17g • fibre 12g • protein 29g • salt 0.5g

You'll find lots of other healthy recipes at *bbcgoodfoodme.com*

Shoot director RACHEL BAYLY | Food stylist SOPHIE GODWIN

3 of 5-a-day

super soup

Try a healthy twist on classic comfort food with this silky veggie soup topped with almonds. It's low in fat and calories but packed full of flavour

recipe SARA BUENFELD *photograph* ROB STREETER

White velvet soup with smoky almonds

SERVES 2 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 25 mins **EASY** V ❄

FIBRE | VIT C | 3 OF 5-A-DAY

2 tsp rapeseed oil
2 large garlic cloves, sliced
2 leeks, trimmed so they're mostly white in colour, washed well, then sliced (about 240g)
200g cauliflower, chopped
2 tsp vegetable bouillon powder
400g cannellini beans, rinsed
fresh nutmeg, for grating
100ml whole milk
25g whole almonds, chopped
½ tsp smoked paprika
2 x 25g slices rye bread, to serve

1 Heat the oil in a large pan. Add the garlic, leeks and cauliflower and cook for about 5 mins, stirring frequently, until starting to soften (but not colouring).
2 Stir in the vegetable bouillon and beans, pour in 600ml boiling water and add a generous few gratings of the nutmeg. Cover and leave to simmer for 15 mins until the leeks and cauliflower are tender. Add the milk and blitz with a hand blender until smooth and creamy.
3 Put the almonds in a dry pan and cook very gently for 1 min, or until toasted, then remove from the heat. Scatter over the paprika and mix well. Ladle the soup into bowls, top with the spicy nuts and serve with the rye bread.

GOOD TO KNOW low fat • low cal • folate • fibre • vit c • 3 of 5-a-day
PER SERVING 395 kcals • fat 15g • saturates 3g • carbs 37g • sugars 10g • fibre 15g • protein 21g • salt 0.7g



Food stylist SOPHIE GODWIN

GOURMET LIFESTYLE



THE SUITE LIFE
BURJ AL ARAB
p70

Competitions, p75



THE SUITE LIFE

Looking to up the ante this Valentine's Day with a jaw-dropping gift? An escape to Burj Al Arab "the world's most luxurious hotel" will definitely impress your other half



Growing up in Dubai, I recall driving past Burj Al Arab, taking in the progress of the world's self-proclaimed "seven-star hotel." I was too young to comprehend this level of luxury, but I still remember my first visit to the hotel over 15 years ago, a moment when I was overcome with awe.

I felt the same upon arriving at the hotel this time around. While the simple blue and white sail-shaped hotel blends seamlessly into the Dubai skyline, the lobby décor is far from what you would expect, considering the façade. Pops of gold, blue and hints of maroon meet your eyes upon arrival with a sail-inspired architectural theme prevalent throughout the hotel.

CHECK-IN

The Panoramic One Bedroom Suite, the size of an average Dubai apartment, offers stunning views of Jumeirah and the Arabian Gulf. It features a spacious living area, a personal business centre with a Mac desktop, bar, guest bathroom and a luggage room, and that's just downstairs. Upstairs you will find a spacious bed with a mirror on the ceiling, walk-in closet, vanity with the special edition Dyson Supersonic hair dryer, bathroom complete with a Jacuzzi and shower, and to top it off, full-size bottles of Hermes amenities that smell absolutely divine. The lobby's colour scheme carries through to the room, with opulent décor elements and silk and velvet fabrics lending that regal touch.

Each floor has its own butler, with 24-hours service to cater to every request, from drawing you a bath to ordering room service and serving complimentary evening canapes at your suite's dining table. Their turndown service is especially charming, with dim lighting to set the tone for the evening and Mirzam chocolate neatly placed on each side of the bed.







FACILITIES

A trip to the spa is a must for an absolutely relaxed and rejuvenated escape. The treatment room I was ushered into was a contrast from the eye-catching colour scheme in the lobby and rooms, with neutral hues instantly putting you at ease. The signature Relaxing Massage begins with a foot bath ritual, after which you are given a choice of two essential oil blends to choose from. The therapist uses long strokes to ease out muscle knots, to lull you in a state of languor. You may not want to wake up, but we highly recommend a dip in the indoor pool or the Jacuzzi, where you can also catch a gorgeous sunset.



The Burj Al Arab Terrace, a private 10,000 square metre space, is where you may want to spend most of your day when you're away from your suite. Bask in the sun by the saltwater infinity pool, head to one of the four Jacuzzis, and cool down at the freshwater pool with innovative concoctions.

CULINARY OFFERINGS

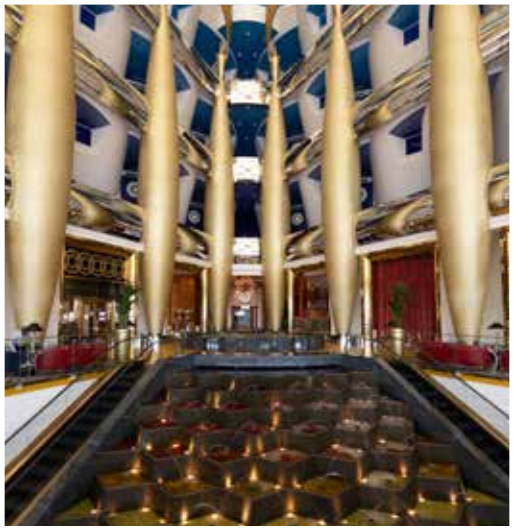
An al fresco lunch is the way to go this time of year, and the newly opened Sal is the place to dine at. Sited near the pools, guests can choose to sit out on the terrace, in a private air-conditioned cabana fitted out with couches and a TV, or on a sunbed on the terrace facing the waters. The airy venue is flooded with natural light in the main restaurant, offering a chic vibe with white tones, crochet and rattan making up the space. The menu comprises southern Mediterranean flavours with highlights being a cold wild salad with egg and pickles served with sourdough, a flavour-packed tuna tartare with caviar, and warm prawns cooked in a moreish roasted tomato sauce, with feta crumbled on top. For an entrée on the lighter side, share the delectable and warming seabream cooked with tomatoes and baked potatoes, so you can end your meal with dessert. The coconut sago pudding with mango will transport you to exotic lands far far away, as you unwind and savour each bite.

Put on your finest outfit for dinner at Al Muntaha. The venue is dimly lit in the evening and you may feel like you've stepped back in time as the décor exudes that charming, age-old feel. Request for a seat by the floor-to-ceiling window so you can dine against the glittering backdrop of Dubai.

My dining partner and I opted for the Degustation menu comprising six courses of classic French cuisine. The amuse bouche,







a deconstructed caprese salad, was the first to arrive with a white tomato-based foam and basil oil awakening our senses. Following on with the first appetiser of the evening, we relished fresh, soft salmon trout with a light Greek yoghurt and sweet vinegar jelly. We were asked to eat all components of the dish in one bite as they come together beautifully when it hits the palate. Up next, juicy langoustine sat atop mashed potato, paired with a full-bodied onion consommé, poured around the dish at the table. The most striking dish served, was the delightful pumpkin puree with Sevruga imperial caviar and pumpkin velouté. Adding tart and sweet notes were little pink tapioca balls that stood out like rubies against the rest of the plate.

It was hard to pick a favourite from the three course but I was told, what was yet to follow would make this decision even harder by the end of the meal. The fourth course was a delectable ravioli of guineafowl, with generous shavings of truffle, parmesan foam and a rich, but delicate, consommé. It's the kind of dish you want to cosy up with while watching your favourite show. The final savoury course is a sublime Australian Angus tenderloin with sauteed forest mushrooms. The fungi was so incredibly juicy and fresh, that had we not been in the UAE, I would've presumed it was foraged that afternoon. Sweet cippollini onions and green pepper sauce rounded off the dish, with all ingredients complementing each other. To end the meal, the Vacherin was presented and cracked open to reveal a sweet cherry yoghurt, pan-fried cherries and ice cream.

> **"The service was absolutely flawless from the minute we entered"**

The service was absolutely flawless from the minute we entered. I was offered a pashmina to keep warm, and each and every member of staff stood close by, to attend to every request. If you do choose the degustation menu, I highly recommend the grape pairing for a stand-out dining experience. Amal Raj Mohana (The Pro Chef's Sommelier of the year 2020) is an absolute delight for recommendations, or even if you just want to pick his brain on certain varieties and grapes.

Come breakfast time, head to Bab Al Yam for an a la carte menu brimming with the usual suspects. Eggs benedict has always been my go-to hotel breakfast, and here, it didn't disappoint. Two muffins arrived with perfectly done medium eggs on a bed of smoked salmon, topped with hollandaise. My dining partner went down the sweet route, with waffles and pancakes topped with chocolate and fresh berries. Diners can also help themselves to freshly baked manakeesh – the zaatar with halloumi is one to try – and an assortment of cold cuts, cheese, granola and nutritious breakfast treats and fresh juices.

GO THE EXTRA MILE!

If you're not ready to leave just yet, after you bid farewell to your suite, make a beeline for Sahn Eddar, where you can unwind and watch luxury cars pulling up into the driveway outside. The decadent afternoon tea begins with a glass of bubbly or non-alcoholic sparkling bubbly, followed by your choice of tea (try the Apple strudel and Jasmine green) and blinis with lightly dressed shredded crab and a spoonful of caviar. A selection of tea sandwiches (cucumber, foie grass with mango and blueberry, and chicken) and a tiered trey with freshly baked scones, clotted cream, lemon curd and jam, arrive soon after. You won't be able to look past the dessert trolley when it rolls by, especially with a decadent chocolate mocha éclair, raspberry millefeuille and honey cake vying for attention, amongst other sumptuous offerings.

NEED TO KNOW

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GREEK-MEDITERRANEAN DINNER AT AIZA, WORTH AED500

Homegrown Greek-Mediterranean restaurant AIZA is a one-stop destination that offers delicious food, refreshments and specially curated live entertainment. From the moment the first dish arrives, guests are taken on a captivating culinary journey, set against a backdrop of the world's largest fountain at The Pointe, Palm Jumeirah. AIZA is inviting one lucky winner to celebrate and experience an evening they will never forget.



DINNER WITH A VIEW AT BENJARONG, WORTH AED500

Sitting atop the 24th floor of Dusit Thani Dubai, with picturesque views of Dubai's glittering skyline and the Burj Khalifa, is Benjarong, an iconic Thai restaurant. The multi-award-winning venue features dishes created from the freshest ingredients, with recipes full of flavour, balance and harmony. One lucky winner and their dining partner can relish Thai food at this vibrant contemporary space.



GIFT VOUCHER FROM NRTC FRESH, WORTH AED500

Get your quota of fresh fruits and vegetables from local and international farms through NRTC Fresh, the online, home delivery platform. They offer a wide range of options, which in turn, allows customers the option of bulk buying their fruits and vegetables or picking up smaller quantities of whole, pre-cut or prepacked produce. NRTC Fresh offers fast and free delivery when customers spend a minimum of AED60. One lucky winner will receive two vouchers worth AED250 each.



DINNER AT IL PASSAGGIO RESTAURANT, WORTH AED500

Il Passaggio, a homegrown Mediterranean-inspired restaurant, is offering one lucky winner the chance to win a set dinner for two. The menu is ingredient-focused, with new creations being rustled up in the kitchen daily. The restaurant bakes fresh artisanal bread, croissants, pastries and viennoiseries; and the chefs even create their in-house pasta. One winner and a dining partner will receive a choice of starter, main and a dessert each, including refreshing soft beverages.



GIFT VOUCHER AT MARKS & SPENCER, WORTH AED500

To mark the most romantic month of the year, iconic British retailer Marks & Spencer is offering one food lover store credit to shop the brand's delicious range of products. Known for using only top-quality ingredients and having high ethical and environmental standards, Marks & Spencer's chocolate is made with rich, 100% responsibly sourced cocoa. Wow loved ones with a spread of freshly baked cinnamon swirls, pastries drizzled in chocolate and indulge in their special Valentine's Day line of chocolates with a romantic twist.



A V60 BREWING CLASS OR A COFFEE ROASTING CLASS AT THIRD WAVE CAFÉ, WORTH AED2,000

Calling all coffee lovers! Third Wave, the Kissaten-style coffee house located at Al Barari is giving away two fabulous prizes this month, worth AED 1,000 each. The boutique cafe is offering a V60 coffee brewing class to one winner, for up to four people, while the second winner gets a speciality coffee roasting class for four. What's more is that each group of four will get to enjoy 20 drinks from the menu during the class too.



STORE CREDIT AT FREAKIN' HEALTHY, WORTH AED500

Freakin' Healthy is giving one lucky winner credit to spend on its products. The snacks available are vegan, junk-free, include great-tasting natural ingredients, and free from wheat, dairy, refined cane sugar, gluten, GMO, preservatives, artificial colours, flavourings and soy. From Superfood Bars and Protein Balls to Fruity Stars, there are options for all ages, lifestyles and times of the day.



A MEAL AT SAMAKJÉ, WORTH AED500

Samakjé (which loosely translates to "Fish Expert") offers delicious Levantine-inspired cuisine with a modern twist. The menu features a selection of cold and hot mezze such as truffle labneh dip, fish tajine and lobster kibbeh, along with a line-up of cross-culture confections such as lemon curd labneh cheesecake and chocolate mousse pastilla. Guests can find their very own Samakjé at the 'fresh seafood counter' and seek advice on what to choose from the assortment on display. One lucky winner will get to experience this restaurant, set against the world's largest fountain at The Pointe, Palm Jumeirah.

To be in with a chance of winning these prizes, visit our competitions page on bbcgoodfoodme.com, or simply scan this QR code with your mobile to directly to the website.

*Terms & conditions apply. Employees of CPI Media Group and entrants below 21 years old are not eligible to enter. Winners will be selected on random basis from correct entries.



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Join us on Friday, 12th February for brunch and on Sunday, 14th February for our signature restaurants.

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